

A Treatise of  
**Self-Examination,**  
In order to the  
**Worthy Receiving**  
OF THE  
**HOLY COMMUNION,**  
Together with suitable  
**P R A Y E R S.**

---

By Monsieur JOHN CLAVDE, Minister of  
the Reformed CHVRCH at PARIS, being  
his MEDITATIONS since the late Persecuti-  
ons of the Protestants in FRANCE.

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*Let a man examine himself, and so let him  
eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup,  
I Cor. 11. 28.*

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Faithfully Translated for the benefit of the Re-  
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**E D I N B U R G H,**  
Printed by the Heir of Andrew,  
Printer to His most Sacred Ma-  
*Anno DOM. 1685.*





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TO THE  
READER.

**A**Mongst those many Debates which grow too warm between the several Parties in this Nation, to the great Scandal of Religion, and the Disturbing of the Government, and the Un-christian Despise and Censure one of another; I doubt not but there are many serious and sober Christians, who choose rather to retire into themselves, and look in to the state of their own Souls, whilst others make this restless noise abroad. And therefore I Recommend this



*To the Reader.*

short Treatise to these, to spend a few hours in the Reading and Meditating upon it ; whilst others waste their time in Pamphlets and Libels. I confess we have several very eminent Pieces, written by the Learned, Orthodox and Laborious Doctors of our own Church, concerning the same Subject that I here offer to you : But I remember *Solomon* at the Building of the Temple , made use not only of materials which his own Country abounded in, but also fetched some from the Kingdom of *Tyre*.

In our Temporal Concerns, though our own Nation afford us great plenty for the necessities of Food and Raiment , yet how many thousands are employed in Importation of foreign

*To the Reader.*

reign Commodities. The conveniencies of our Souls are to be regarded as well as those of our Bodies; and though we are, blessed be God, furnished with these in our own Country, as fully as any Nation in the World; yet the most learned Doctors cannot say but they are much beholden to those of other Churches, and that they have taken in much Light from them; and therefore why may not Christians of other capacities receive benefit from the Labours of those of another Church. This was my Design in Translating this Treatise into our native Tongue, and if any receive advantage by it, I have what I intended; however, I have not lost my Labour, for in this Work I have the better digest-

## To the Reader.

ed the pious Meditations of the Author, to the satisfaction of my own mind. I do not question but that whoever Reads it, will thank the Author for publishing this Edition, and giving us that to our use which you see in the Advertisement he purposed for his own. Self-Examination is a difficult task, and a great work, and such as give us good Rules for the facilitating it, and preventing mistakes, deserve very well from us.

The time when the Author wrote this, was since the Reformed Church in *France* had her Persecutions renewed against her; and in Afflictions men are most thoughtful, and make the strictest inquiries into their



## *To the Reader.*

their own Heart ; So that we may very well believe, that we have not only the Learning and Judgement , but also the fresh experience of the Author , delivered to us in many of his Rules. I will say no more, but leave every Man to use it as he finds it, and value it as it deserves.

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A N  
Advertisment.

**T**He Author of this Treatise, having already for some time Composed it for his own particular use, and for the use of some other persons who had desired it: It happened that some Printer surreptitiously published a Copy of it, which was full of gross Faults, without order, without distinction, and which in divers places was not only without Sense, but also represented often a false Sense, and contrary to that of the Author. This is that which obliged him himself to make this Edition, of which the publick is advertised that they might not take for his Work an Edition which is almost every where corrupt, which he is obliged to disown, acknowledging none but this second to be his.

THE

THE  
Examination  
OF A  
MAN'S SELF  
IN  
Order to prepare him  
FOR THE  
**Communion.**

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CHAP. I.

*Of the necessity of Self-Examination.*

**A**S God never presents himself to the Creatures eyes, but when he is attended with all the



the marks of his infinite Majesty : The Creature also ought never to appear before him without being seized with a Religious fear, and without his utmost endeavours of putting himself into an estate of respect, and profound humility. We find in the History of the Old Testament, that when the Lord manifested himself first to *Moses*, under the Image of a burning Bush; *Moses* surprised and astonished at this Object, would immediately have drawn near, that he might more particularly have discovered the miracle; but at the same instant he heard a voice, saying unto him,

*Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*  
 Exod. 3.

God would stop that temerarious.

merarious and precipitant motion of *Moses*, which would have carried him to the Bush; because where the presence of God is, man can never use too much precaution, nor act with too much reservedness. And as to the command of pulling off his shoes, it is certain that under the figure of that corporal action, he commanded an interiour Sanctification: For it was, as if he had ordained him to deuest himself of all that he had, that was mean and terrestrial, and to purifie himself of all his former Soils.

We may say with truth, that the Sacrament of the Holy Supper, which Jesus Christ hath established in his Church, hath something more Venerable and more Sacred then the Bush of *Moses*.

I confess that our Eyes discover nothing that is either surprizing or miraculous. We regard not the matter, the Bread and the Wine, which are ordinary objects and things of small value: But as mean and vile as the matter is, we must not doubt but God is present in this holy action, with all the lustre of his Grandeur and Majesty, since it is a mystery of his grace, & an authentick pledge of his Covenant with us, so that we must not approach it without a just and lawful preparation. Put off then, miserable sinner, thy shoes from thy feet, quite thy Impurities, sanctifie thy Conscience, place thy self in a condition of Humiliation and Piety; for the place where thou art, is not holy Earth, but an August Heaven, the Throne of the Lamb



Lamb of God, before whom the Angels attend, and where the Eternal Father is set with his Son in glory.

These holy preparations chiefly consist in a solid and exact Examination, which every one ought to make of himself, for on that partly depend the motions, and sentiments of Piety, of Repentance, of Confidence and Devotion, which ought to accompany us when we approach the Table of our Lord ; but to judge the better of the necessity of this Examination, it is requisit that we make a more particular reflexion upon the greatness and importance of the action of the Communion ; for it is not an ordinary action, or of little consequence. This Divine Sacrament is an Abridgment of all that is  
more



more great and more admirable in Religion, a Temple which incloses Nature, Grace and Glory, a Sanctuary where God and Men meet together, in Comparison, in Opposition, and in Communion: to wit, in Comparison of his Sovereign Majesty with our Nothing; in Opposition of his Justice with our Perverseness; and in Communion of his Love, and his Mercy, with our Faith and our Regeneration. He is there as a Creator, as a Master, as a Law-giver, in all the Rights that his only eternal Essence, and the first Cause of all things gives him over us; and we are there in this mystical Repast, to render him the most profound, and most perfect Homage of our dependance, He is there as a God who hath made the World, who preserves it,

it, who governs it, and who hath given Laws to Men, setting before their Eyes on the one hand the punishments of his wrath; and on the other, the just advantages of his blessing: And we are there to confess that all that we are, and all that we have is from him, that we are under a natural and indispenfible obligation to observe his Laws, and that if we have violated them, our condemnation is just. Again, he is there as a Judge upon his Tribunal, beset round with all the punishments of his vengeance; a Judge which sees all, who examines all, who discerns all, who sounds all hearts, and the most secret motions of the Soul, and who condemns crimes, wherefoever he finds them. And we are there as unhappy Criminals, whom

whom the disobedience of the first man hath plunged, with all the rest of Mankind into a general corruption, which makes us slaves of Satan, of Hell and Death, and hath sunk us into an Eternal ruine. In fine, he is there as a God of Mercy and Peace, who seeing us in this horrible misery, hath laid a design to rescue us out of it, by pardoning our sins and raising us to a hope of his Kingdom.

There are displayed as in a precious draught all the admirable ways which God hath made use of to save us, to wit, the Embassay of Jesus Christ, and all his Oeconomy. This divine Saviour presents himself there, on the one side invested with all the glory of his natural condition; and on the other side environed with all the



the ignominies, and all the do-  
lours of his annihilation, smeared  
and covered with his precious  
blood which he shed for us. There  
all the marvels of his Incarnation  
meet together, all the sufferings  
of his Life, all the Infirmities,  
and all the accidents which ac-  
companied him upon Earth; the  
cruel persecutions of his Enemies,  
the fierce assaults the Devil offer-  
ed him, his anguishes in the Gar-  
den of *Gethsemane*, his Arrest, his  
Condemnation, his Nakedness,  
his Cross, his Crown of Thorns,  
his Scarlet Robe, his Gaul, his  
Vinegar; in a word, there is all  
the sad appearances of his bloody  
Death. But these Objects are  
not alone, they shew us others  
also; for we see there the entire  
and perfect Innocence of the per-  
son of our Redeemer, the Infinite  
and

and inestimable price of his Sacrifice, which alone hath been able to render the Divinity favourable to us; the ardent Love, and immense Goodness, which made him so voluntarily expose his Life for our Salvation. We see there the Eternal glory which hath followed his abasement, and which is the just Crown of his Combats; his Resurrection, his Ascension into Heaven, his sitting at the Right-hand of God, and the effusion of his Holy Spirit which he made, and of his light throughout the World. And as Jesus Christ presents himself to us in this action, under all the respects of his Grace; so on our part we ought to be there with all the sentiments of Faith, of Gratitude, of Contrition, of Hope, of Zeal, which these great mysteries de-

deserve, if we would gather the fruits for which they are appointed: From hence we may easily know, that we are not to thrust our selves lightly upon so important a Communion; but on the contrary to prepare our selves by a reflexion of our Souls upon themselves, by an elevation of our thoughts above all these earthly things, and by a sincere animadversion upon our selves, to see if we are not entirely unworthy to approach this Divine Table.

This necessity appears also, if we cast our Eyes upon the consequences of a good and bad Communion. For it is true, if we receive this heavenly Sacrament as we ought, we receive life and a blessed Immortality, we find there peace with God, joy and consolation



lation of Soul, and a right to the  
 Eternal Inheritance : But if on  
 the contrary we partake unwor-  
 thily, this Hcly Comunion is a  
 fire which consumes our Bowels,  
 we have in it a Death and Con-  
 demnation assured to us. We  
 have then a great concern not  
 to come without a just prepara-  
 tion, for fear that instead of ta-  
 king a remedy, we take poyson  
 there, and lest it should hasten  
 and aggravate our Judgement.  
 This is the reason why *St. Paul*  
 Treating upon this Subject in his  
 first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, per-  
 ceiving himself possessed with a  
 holy fear, seeing the danger Com-  
 municants expose themselves to,  
 saith, *Let every one exa-*  
*mine himself, and so let* 1 Cor. 11  
*him eat of that Bread,*  
*and drink of that Cup; for he that*  
*eat-*

*eateth and drinketh unworthily,  
eateth and drinketh damnation to  
himself.*

Besides the necessity of this Examination will appear to you, if you consider well, how difficult a thing it is for a Man to know himself well ; and on the contrary, how easie it is to deceive himself, and make too favourable a judgement of himself : Who knows not, how self-love disguises things, and that the natural inclination which we have to esteem our selves, makes us scarce see our faults, or see them so falsely as to call them vertues. We have two Weights, and two Balances, the one for our own sins, which we diminish as much as possible, extenuating and excusing them, and reducing them almost to nothing, and the other  
for

for our good qualities, which we exaggerate in the joy of our hearts, exalting them to our Eyes in a thousand rich colours, and magnifying them infinitely beyond their natural Idea. It concerns us then extreamly, to make a serious Examination of our selves, that we may not fall into these illusions which are so ordinary to all men.

I confess that if to know our selves well, we need no more but to compare our selves with debauched men, who make an open profession of sin, and which pass their lives in wickedness, and uncleanness; it would be then no great difficulty, every one need no more but to cast his Eyes upon his own conduct, and at the first sight the difference would appear. But the *Pharisee* made his account  
in



in this manner. O God,  
saith he, *I thank thee that* Luk. 18.  
*I am not as other men are,*  
*no extortioner, oppressor, nor un-*  
*just person, no adulterer, nor even*  
*as this Publican.* Jesus Christ  
sayes, he went not away to his  
house Justified : If it were no  
more but to compare our selves  
with Hypocrites and Impostors,  
which conceal Vices, and Infa-  
mies under the appearances of  
Sanctity. Every one might easi-  
ly distinguish themselves from such  
people : but it is certain that that  
is not sufficient to judge the veri-  
ty and solidity of a Christian Re-  
generation by. We must do  
more, we must distinguish our  
vertue from a simple moral hone-  
sty, which the Temperature, the  
Education, Age, and the study of  
Philosophy may give. We must  
di-

distinguish it from a civil vertue, which humane Laws, the principles of Society, the example of the wisest Men, Experience, Office and Dignities may produce. We must distinguish it from a vain, but specious Image of Sanctity, which Superstition, and false Religions may inspire. In fine, we must distinguish it from all those bastard, and imperfect acts of Piety and Sanctity, which may proceed from the first **D**ispositions of grace, and more particularly from that sort of temporary and fragile faith, which Jesus Christ. spake of in one of his **P**arables, for in his noting the different orders of those which hear the Gospel, he saith, *That some receive the word with joy; but having no root in themselves, endure but for a*

Sea-

*Season; but when oppression and persecution cometh for the Gospels sake, by and by they are offended.*

But a sincere and saving Regeneration goeth much further. Nevertheless as these natural Characters are quick and sensible; it will not be difficult to discern them from those false and deceitful imitations, if we could have them pure, and without any mixture of corruption, but alas experience teacheth us but too well, that whatever progress we have made in holiness, the flesh still Combats against the spirit. There are remains of sin ever within us which embroile the estate of our Conscience, and this is that which makes this discernment so hard; yet it is not impossible; else St.

2 Cor. 13. *Paul would not have said, Prove your selves,*



to know whether *Jesus Christ* be in you. Being then neither easie, nor impossible, and also of so great importance to us, it is our duty to apply our selves to it with care, and above all, not to neglect it upon an occasion, where it is so absolutely necessary, as it is in the Holy Sacrament.

In times past God would have the *Israelites* purifie themselves exactly, before they did eat the *Passover*, therefore you shall find in the second of the *Chronicles*, that many of the people had time to purifie themselves according to the Ordinance of the Law, and having not forbore to eat the *Passover*, *Hezekiah* made a Prayer to them, in these words, *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the*

2 Chron.  
30. 18, 19.

Lord

*Lord God of his Fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary. If God required so great a preparation for the Celebration of the old Passover, how much more may he require from us, when we go about to partake of his Sacrament. This preparation is necessary in all the particular acts of Religion, but chiefly in this, since, as we have said, it is a general act which comprehends all all the holiest parts of Religion, and in which all the Gates of a Man's Conscience ought to be opened to the Eyes of God, as the Treasures of God are opened therein to the Eyes of Men.*

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## CHAP. II.

*The first rule to make this Examination well by. To take a true account of our own Sins.*

**I**F you demand in, what manner we ought to proceed in this Examination? I answer in general, that we must proceed humbly, as before the Eyes of our Creator which sees us, sincerely, and with a good faith, as acting the greatest concern that we have, diligently and scrupulously, as being the most dangerous thing in the World to be deceived in. In fine, you must proceed in an uninterrupted and constant manner, being an action that must not be left imperfect. I shall therefore endeavour to set down in this treatise, some Rules  
to



to acquit this duty well, and the first I propose shall be this.

We must Examine our selves of our peculiar sins, I say of our peculiar sins, for as I said before, whilst we are here on Earth, we do not profess a perfect Holiness, nor a Righteousness free from Spots; we shall not attain that glory till we are in Heaven: Nevertheless there is a great difference betwixt the manner of a righteous Man's sinning, and the manner of a wicked Man's.

A pious Man may not only fall into sin, but also into very gross sins, which may stagger the state of the Conscience, and grieve the Holy Spirit, to make use of the Scripture Phrase. Yet betwixt him and a wicked Man, in my opinion there are four notorious differences.

The first is, That a wicked Man falls, or may fall into the same Excesses very often, by reason that he sins either by habit or inclination: But a good Man cannot fall often into the same enormous fault, because a habit or criminal inclination cannot be strongly rooted in his heart, being a thing absolutely incompatible with a true Faith, and true Regeneration: when then we see a Man by the return of the same objects, and the same occasion, commit the same crimes, it is an evident sign that he is not in the number of true believers. A true Christian may be surprized once, or twice; but the horror which he hath for his fault after he hath committed it, and the præcautions that he afterwards takes against his own infirmitie, can hardly

hardly suffer him to fall back unto the same sins. Grace is represented to us in the Scripture under the figure of a War, and amongst many reasons which be given for it, this appears to me the most proper; to wit, that in Grace, as in a War, they endeavour principally to fortifie those places, which experience hath noted to be the weakest, and the most dangerous; they guard themselves against the attacks of the Enemy, and use such care and industry, that at last they become impregnable. Every Man may fail, but if he be in a perpetual intention of correcting himself, as a true Christian ought to be, 'tis almost impossible for him to commit the same great offences often.

The second difference consists



in that a wicked Man seldom feels any remorse, or inward conflicts at the instant he sins; or if he feel any, they come from considerations of moral honesty, and a certain natural confusion, which almost all Men have in the committing evil actions. Though to speak truth, it must be acknowledged, this very sentiment is but very weak in an unregenerate Man, at the instance of his sinning; because he is either dazled or conquered by the Idea of his joy, or interest which he receives in the Action: yet it may happen that his bare moral honesty may give him some secret removes. But a pious Man, by which I mean a good Christian, a Man truly called to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, that Man, I say, shall never fall into a gross sin, but at  
the

the same instant he shall feel pungent dolours in his Soul, strifes and regrets, which proceed not only from impressions of honesty, and that natural modesty, which I hinted before, but from the sense of his offending God, and the breach he hath made in his own hopes of Salvation; however impetuous the motion of his passion is, or however violent or transported it may be, if he hath truly received the principles of Piety into his heart, or if you will allow me to say so, if he hath received the Seal of grace from above; it is not possible but his heart should make some resistance, how ever thick and black the cloud of flesh and blood is, which then covers his Soul: It is not possible, but he should see the Image of his God through this

Vail, which he so much defaces by his ingratitude. I acknowledge that this cloud of flesh and blood darkens commonly these impressions of God, and takes from them the principal part of their strength and efficacy; for if it were not so, they would not have fallen into the sin. But I say again, that it cannot so cover it, but that there remains ever some sentiments in the bottom of the Soul, from whence proceeds those secret pangs, and those hidden remorse which so astonish and terrifie a Man in the midst of the very joy of his sin.

The third difference is, That an evil Man, that is, a Man of the World, whom God hath not regenerated, feels but very few motions toward Repentance after he



he hath committed his sin, and  
 this happens more especially when  
 his crime hath had a happy suc-  
 cess; I mean when he hath either  
 received some great joy, or some  
 great profit, or that he hath at-  
 tained some great honour, and  
 some external glory amongst  
 Men; the successes of which so  
 flatters his ambition, avarice, or  
 voluptuousness, which comply-  
 ing with self-love, permits him  
 scarce to hearken to the voice  
 of Conscience, or the Complaint  
 of vertue, which he hath so un-  
 worthily abandoned. It is quite  
 otherwise with a Regenerate  
 Man, when he falls into these  
 sorts of sins by the surprize of  
 his Senses, and by the assaults of  
 his passions, he cannot wallow  
 long in it, he will rise again by  
 Repentance. Whatever happy  
 success

success he hath had in his sins, it is not possible but the Idea of his God, and of Christ Jesus his Saviour will represent it self to him, and make him return from his wanderings. And as when we are amongst strangers who court and caress us, we may easily perceive in those moments of sweetness that the remembrance of our dear Country and Family diminishes. But when our spirit is no longer thus prepossessed, and we come to our selves, it is impossible but the love of our Country, and of our dear Family, should again lay hold of us, and act powerfully upon our hearts to oblige us to return to it. In the like manner, it is easie to apprehend, that in the excess of our passions, and all the time whilst the enchantment of sin lasts, the remem-

remembrance of our duty to God, and to Jesus Christ his Son suffer some Eclipse: But when the force of the charm is ceased, and we come into cold blood, we must necessarily recal the memory of our first state, and then the face of God justly incensed represents it self to us, and creates in our hearts sensible and violent regrets. Happy successes can then have no more effect upon us; for self-love is not that which Reigns in the Soul of a faithful Christian; but the love of God possesses the first place; and though it hath been rudely assaulted by the fury of that party, which they call the appetite, and that it hath been, as it were constrained to yield to the torrent, it hath not yet wholly lost its rank, nor its force. From hence proceed those  
 bitter



bitter displeasures, those sighs, those Tears, those Contritions of heart, those ardent Groans, which we see in the faithful after their fall. We have an eminent Example in the person of *David*, in the One and Fiftieth Psalm, where he expresses all the lines of a lively and deep Repentance, *Have mercy*

*Psal. 51. upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my fault, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*

The Fourth difference is, That a Man who is not Regenerated may

may fall, and fall many times into sins of the same kind, but also at the same time commit many sins of a different kind, Adultery, Treason, Calumny, injustice. For provided that these sins accommodate themselves to his self-love, and that they delight him in divers respects, it will not be difficult for him to go thorough with them at the same time. But it is not so with a good Christian; he may indeed, by the surprizeal of some great object, suffer himself to be blinded, and commit a great sin: yet he is not capable of committing at the same time many sins of a different kind, nor to fall into a general relinquishment of Sanctity. For as a Body pierced with many wounds, cannot but be in a mortal state, although e-  
very

very wound in particular be not mortal; so a Regeneration which is set upon in divers places, and combated by many different sins, certainly knows not how to subsist, although any one of those sins in particular, be not altogether incompatible with a state of Regeneration; I might say also, that it doth not utterly deface and destroy it. This is the first Rule that we give for the Examination of our selves; to wit, That a Man make reflection upon his own past sins, and that he judge himself by these four differences, which we have here remarked. For it is certain, that if he find himself engaged in a habitude of vices, which make him often fall into the same offences, if in the moment that he sins, he perceives in himself no resistance, or more-  
over,



over, if he perceives not but the resistances come from moral and humane honesty, without the Idea of God, and of Jesus Christ his Redeemer, and of his own Salvation, having any part in them; if he doth not quickly recover himself by a lively and true Repentance, accompanied with sharp remorses, if he find himself engaged in many sins of divers sorts; this is a certain mark that the corruptions of nature reign altogether in him, and that he is not truly in the Communion of Jesus Christ. These things are not found in a heart which the Holy Spirit hath sanctified, and to which he hath given the Image of Righteousness. But if in this Examination which he shall make, he find it altogether otherwise, if the sins that he hath committed are rather

rather acts of weakness, and surprise, then effects of an old habit, if in the committing of them he perceives combates in his heart on the part of Grace, and by the principles of Piety. if the victory of the flesh lasts not long, but gives place to a sincere Repentance, if to the measure that his infirmities have prevailed in one point, the other parts of Piety and Sanctity have preserved themselves; we may reasonably conclude, that his Regeneration is not vain, and chymetical, but he may draw from thence motives of consolation and hope, and be perswaded that God loves him, and that he will not abandon him.

## CHAP. III.

*The second Rule for this Examination, to take a true account of his own Virtue.*

I Say then in the Second place; that to discharge a Man's self well of this duty, he must Examine his own probity, which consists, as all the World knows in these two points, to abstain from evil, and to do good, or as the Scripture speaks, *To be dead unto sin, and live unto righteousness.* And upon this subject we may almost see, methinks, the Characters of a Man truly Regenerate.

The first is, when he abstains from sin, and does good works, not by any inclination, which his natural temper gives him, nor by



by the force of some habitudes which he hath long contracted, nor by humane considerations taken from his own interest, and his own honour, nor by the force of his reason which tells him that evil is evil, and good is good, but by the considerations of the fear of God, out of a desire to obey, and please him. This Character is worthy of great consideration, for it is that which distinguishes a Moral, Civil Vertue, from Christian Vertue. We cannot deny but there hath been, and that there are yet to this day almost an infinite number of Men, which belong not to Jesus Christ, and in the bottom have not true Regeneration, who yet suffer not themselves but to live very morally. How many people were there in the thick darkness of Paganism

ganism, whole manners, if we well consider them, would make us ashamed, if they were compared with ours? How many also are there in our Age, amongst those that we call Men of the World, who live and behave themselves in a very honest manner, who are courteous, just, accessible, who wrong no Body, but on the contrary seek occasions to oblige? But it is certain, that all the Vertue of this people, how fair soever it appears in the Eyes of Men, is nothing else but a false Image, because it proceeds not from any good principles: They have a horror of Injustice, Violence, Theft, Adultery, and other Crimes of that nature, because their temper will not bear it; others have corrected their temper by a more regular Education; others

others abstain from them, because that the simple light of Reason, or that of Philosophical Wisdom makes them see, that there is a disorder and indignity in these sort of actions; less honest means do estrange others from these vices, because that their interest, or their love of vain-glory resists them. But there is none who abstains upon that true and essential reason which ought to restrain us, which is, that these sins are an abomination to God, and that those who commit them can never be agreeable to him.

I say the same thing of good works: The people of this World who have no part in Regeneration, may yet do the same kind in appearance, as those of good Christians; they may pardon injuries, console the afflicted, succour



cour the oppressed, give Alms to the Poor, they may be Chast, Sober, Just, Vigilant, Gracious, in that manner, that if we judge according to outward appearance, we cannot make any difference between them and the true Children of God. So that it concerns us very much to know that a true Christian forbears not evil things, nor performs good works by these principles only which I have mentioned, or any others like them: But out of a desire to do the will of God, and to procure his blessing upon us, and to escape his wrath. It imports us then to know that this is the only thing in which the Soul of true vertue consists, which must be an obedience not simply to the Law of Nature, but to the Law of the Lord of Nature, an obedience not

out

out of Constraint, but of Love, not simply to please our selves, and to have nothing to reproach our selves with, but to please God, and to glorifie him as much as it is possible for us. This the Scripture teacheth us, when it calls holiness and good works a service which we render unto God. *Let*

*us have grace* (saith the Heb. 12. 28. *Apostle*) *by which we may serve God. That we*

Luk. 1. 75. *may serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life,* saith

*Zacharias:* When it calls them a life to God; *Ye are dead,* saith the Apostle, *unto sin, but*

Rom. 6. *alive unto God, through*

*Jesus Christ: A servitude to God; Ye are made free* (saith the same Apostle) *from sin, and become servants unto God:*

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*A sacrifice to God ; I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you present your Body a Rom. 12 living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

We must then sound our selves upon this point, and endeavour to penetrate our hearts sufficiently, to try if we can discover that motive which is inseparable from true sanctification. For if we perceive that the thoughts of God enters into the good that we do, and that it is this principally which turns us away from evil, and which puts us upon good works; this is a certain mark of the truth of our Faith. But on the contrary, if we find not these motives, the Indication must be very ill.

The second Character is, That



a good Man, what ever struglings he hath had in refraining from evil, and doing good, whatever temptations he hath resisted, which would have carried him another way, as we cannot doubt, but that he will have such very often; if that after having obtained a victory over himself, he perceives a great joy that he hath taken the good part, and that this joy fails not to have its respect to God, and to be grounded upon this, that he hath escaped these dangerous occasions of sinning against him, or that he hath done things that may be agreeable to him. It is otherwise with a Man who is not in a state of Regeneration, when he refrains from evil or doth good, he finds in himself motives conformable to the principles by which he is led; if he

he hath followed his temper , or the force of an habitude, he perceives neither joy nor grief, he looks upon what he hath done with a kind of indifference : if he hath been actuated by a principle of hypocrisie, or interest, or ambition , or vain glory , and that the success hath answered to his design, the joy which he hath is wholly of the same nature with his passion ; that is to say, worldly, carnal, earthly, and such as God hath no part in. If he hath acted only out of fear of punishment, he hath indeed a joy that he hath not drawn mischief upon himself, but he hath at the same time a regret for not having done that which he desired, if fear had not restrained him. However there is no unregenerated Man who is sensible of that sweet and

inward joy, which is grounded upon having done ones duty towards God, and being assured of his approbation. There are none but the faithful who are capable of this; but as they never fail to have a sense of it, especially when they have had the pain of overcoming themselves, and resisting the power of temptation; this Character seems one of the most sure and infallible, and ought not to be lightly passed over.

We must not also neglect a third difference, which distinguishes the faithful from the unregenerate; to wit, That the life of these last never consists of an universal Righteousness. You may find in them certain sins, and certain moral vertues: But in the same measure that you see them exempt from one, two, three, or four



four vices, if you examine well you will find them entangled in many others; and in the same measure that you find them shine in some good works of one kind, you will see them fail in many others. The reason of this is, that when a man is not regenerated by the power of grace, he can never forbear sin, nor do good but by particular principles, which never extend to all sorts of sins, nor to all sorts of vertue: For example, The force of Constitution may restrain a Man from thievery, or drunkenness, or from rage and transports of passion; it may carry him to courteousness, to chastity and sobriety: Interest and vain-glory may interdict him such or such evil actions, and command such or such good ones. But neither natural Tem-

per, nor Interest, nor Ambition, nor Education, nor Example, nor Precepts of Philosophy, nor any such like principles can ever be able to draw a Man from all sorts of vices, and inspire him with all sorts of virtues. There is nothing but heavenly grace, and the Religion of Jesus Christ, which can effect this ; these only change a Man with a general change, these only transform him, and make him a new Creature. This is the reason why the Men of this World may have a shadow, and Image of some particular virtue, but they cannot have so much as an appearance of an universal Righteousness.

It is otherwise with the truly faithful. The fear of God and his love, the desire of obeying, and serving, and pleasing him, are prin-

principles which regenerate the whole heart, and banish from it all sorts of sins, which establish there a righteousness, and holiness in all respects. I confess there remains still much imperfection, for

*Who can say, I have made*

Pro.20. *my heart clean, I am pure from my sin.* But

this is because that the holiness being spread throughout, the imperfection of the same also is spread throughout, and not that holiness possesses one place, and iniquity another. It is not as in our natural day, where the light and the darkness are separate; but it is as in the morning, when though the light is prædominant, yet it is mingled with darkness. This is a holiness which is complete and entire, in regard of its parts, all the vertues which ought to



to compose it are there, and all the vices which destroy it are chased away: But yet all the virtues are infirm and languishing, and all the vices are not utterly rooted out. That hinders not nevertheless, but that it is true, that a Christian Regeneration gives an universal inclination to good, and a general aversion to all evil; yet this inclination, and this aversion are not in the highest degree of their perfection. It is almost with the new Man in grace, as it is with a young Child in nature, he hath all essential parts which ought to compose him, a Body, and a Soul, a Body furnished with all its different Organs, both inward and outward, a Soul endued with all its faculties, but yet all this but weak, and far short of what it will be

be at the age of Manhood.

To make then a just Examination of our selves, we must consider upon this point, and see if we find in our selves, this universal righteousness. This general inclination to all sorts of good works, and this aversion to all sorts of vices. For if in the course of our life we discover some habits of evil, so that our vices and our virtues go together, and make two equal lines, this is a certain mark, that there is no true Regeneration in us.

A fourth Character of this true Regeneration is humility in the practice of virtue, and in the forsaking of vice. Indeed a Man who is not Regenerated, but by force of some of those principles, which we have already noted, lives morally well, fails not to

become conceited and proud, out of a sense of his honesty. For as this is self-love, and not the fear of God which reigns in his heart, and by necessary consequence, all the good that is seen in them must relate to his own glory, and that he doth it upon the account of esteem, or as the Prophet speaks, that he offers *Incense to his own Net, and Sacrifices to his own Drag.* But on the contrary, as it is the love of God that reigns in the heart of the faithful, and that he regards that always as his last end, or as his principal object, it is impossible but all that he sees good in himself should redound to the glory of God, and that he should esteem himself obliged for it, as for a received grace. In the sentiment then of his best actions, he must remain humble,



humble, whatever joy he hath ; because the more good works he doth, the nearer he is to God, and by consequence is the more dazled on all sides, by the lustre of his Majesty, The more good he doth , the more he thinks of God, and the more he thinks of him, the more he compares himself with him, and in this comparison knows himself to be dust and ashes. When *David* said in the second *Psalms*, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling* ; he had not a design to inspire us with a fright and terrour, for they are not consistent with joy ; for they are apter to make us fly from the presence of God, than to draw near to serve him. He only therefore would inculcat to us that humility, which resists not joy, but is the

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the inseparable Companion of the good works of the Faithful.

In fine, The fifth Character that must be observed upon this subject is, That a true Christian never doth good works, or turns away from the occasions of sin, but there remains with him continually an ardent desire to go further, and advance himself more in the ways of holiness. The reason proceeds from this Faithful Man's finding signs and testimonies of his Election and Communion with Jesus Christ in the good works that he performs: and on the contrary, his confidence in this respect is troubled by the sins he commits. And this produceth in him, upon the consideration of his good works, that glorious and *Pet. 2.* unspeakable joy which the

the Scripture mentions : That  
*peace of God which passeth all understanding.* Phil. 4.

'Tis that rest, that assurance which made *David* cry out,  
*The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid.* And it is that also which produces the desire that I have spoke of, of establishing themselves in all good, for he looks upon his good works as the pledges of the Love that GOD bears to him, and as the foundations of that great hope which he hath. From whence it follows, that he endeavours continually to make a progress in his Sanctity, that since according to the measure that his holiness advanceth, the sense of his Election, and of his  
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Communion with Jesus Christ his Saviour advances also, and his hope confirms it self more and more, whereas by his sins the first of these is very much troubled, and the second much shaken. Again the more he advances in Piety, the more he perswades himself that he hath performed his duty, and that he is acceptable to God; by reason of which, the good works that he doth are a spur to him, and an encouragement to proceed. That which we say in disgrace of a covetous Man, that he is never content with what he hath, that he is always desiring more; we may say in the praise of a good man, who makes himself a treasure of his good actions, he never saith it is enough, he uncessantly wishes to encrease the number of them,

them, upon which account Jesus Christ attributes to him an hunger and a thirst; *Blessed* (saith he) *are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness.* Matth. 5.

It is not so with an unregenerate Man, for when he shall do some works morally good, either by the force of his temper, or by a principle of hypocrisie and interest, he perceives no such ardent desire in himself to advance in this holiness, which we speak of. The actions which come from the Temper of a Man being not with them, that keen zeal which excite him to go on, and much less those which proceed from hypocrisie or interest. I confess that those who do good for the esteem that they have of good it self, may be sensible of some-

something which comes near this desire which we have in hand ; but that will never be a desire to please God , and to be agreeable to him, it will only be a desire to do nothing which may derogate from right and natural equity. Now it is true, that in Men whom God hath not yet Regenerated, that desire cannot be extremely quick and lively. However honest and clear their sentiments are, they cannot equal that which a good Man hath, to acquire more and more the favour and grace of his God.

We must then make use of this means also, if we would proceed as we ought in the Examination of our selves, and must joyn with the others, that which I have proposed in this third Rule. They are all of a natural and easie use,  
and



and I am perswaded, if we would execute them well, we might make a certain judgement upon our selves: For as on the one side every one may know easily, if in the good that he doth, he hath a regard to God, and his own Conscience, if after he hath determined to do it, he perceives a joy for having taken the good part, if he perceives in his heart a general inclination to this good, and a general aversion to all which is called sin, if his good works are accompanied with humility and debasement before God, if to that measure that he hath done good, he perceives a desire in himself to do more, he hath then another solid and certain ground to conclude from all this, the truth of his faith, and the sincerity of his conversion.

## CHAP. IV.

*The third Rule. To take a true measure of one's self in the acts of every particular vertue.*

**H**OWever, certain the Rule is that I come from laying down in the precedent Chapter ; but we must not rest there. The matter in agitation is so necessary and important, for the rest and calm of our Conscience, that we cannot acquit our selves too exactly therein. Methinks then that it is good to Examine ones self particularly upon the proper acts of every vertue. For it is not possible that a simple moral vertue, or a false Régeneration, or simple Dispositions towards Conversion, should avail in the  
ex.

excise of particular vertues, or act so like the products of true Piety, that there should be no possible means of discerning the one from the other.

To give then some direction upon this subject, I say first, that the proper and essential marks of a true Faith, are to love the reading of the Word of God, to frequent the Assemblies where it is Preached, to search those Books which give us intelligence, to have a curiosity towards the mysteries of Salvation, to make a particular application to your self as you apprehend them, and meditate upon them, to be touched in general with all the Divine perfections that appear in those mysteries, and chiefly in those three, of his infinite Majesty, his perfect holiness, and unspeakable



able love to us. For these three things faith chooses out above all the rest of the Attributes of God, to meditate upon, because they most touch our hearts, and our hearts cannot betray and deceive themselves upon this subject.

Concerning doubts which are as the weakness and sickness of faith, which are common to true believers, and those that are temporary believers, that is, such whose faith endures but for a time. But there is this difference between them, that in an unregenerate Man, who is one of those temporary believers, the doubts are hearkened to, and received with some sort of joy, but in a true believer they never arise without causing a kind of grief; because the love which we bear to God, cannot suffer his truth

truth to be combated with any appearances that seem to overthrow it. False believers feel nothing of this, no loving God enough to be thus concerned for his glory. A true believer seeks instantly to satisfy himself in all his doubts, they cannot dwell long with him, and when he is satisfied, he receives a secret joy. A false believer scarce feels that joy, or is very glad of remaining in his doubts, that he may ever leave the carnal part in Arms to resist grace, not being willing that the Spirit of the World which is in him, should be entirely without defence, or if he gets out of these doubts by some enquiries into these truths, he cannot see this triumph of truth, without some sort of displeasure and mortification.

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As to the acts of hope, they may be common to a true and false believer, for there is nothing upon which men flatter themselves so easily as upon this: But yet one may remark these differences between them: The one is, that the object of the hope of a false believer, is principally his own happiness, without regard to the principle, from whom he expects it. Whereas the true believer on the other side, much more regards the ineffable Love of God, which he expects one day from his hope, rather than the other advantages which can happen unto him: And the reason is because a false believer, and an half Regenerate Man hath self-love for his first Principle, and interest for his last End, he considers himself more than God; but



but a true Believer loves God above all things , from whence it proceeds that an unbeliever is almost totally fix'd upon his own interest ; and from whence ever his felicity comes, he considers it not, if he be happy, it is all he desires. But a true Christian establishes himself principally upon his sentiment of the love of God towards him , and is ravished by finding himself in his favour, and being in the grace of his good Father, valuing that at a far greater rate than all the advantages and prosperities that can come from it.

Besides an unbeliever that hath but yet received some dispositions towards a Conversion , and not the form of true piety, feels himself chiefly concerned with that share of hope which gives him a  
pro-

prospect of being exempted from all manner of miseries, and an enjoyment of a thousand joys, and a thousand benefits, but in regard of a full Sanctification, and an intire abolition of Vices, he hath but small concernment.

Whereas a true Christian finds himself, though concerned indeed by a thirst of his happiness, yet incomparably more upon the account of Grace. The cause of

this difference is, that in the half Conversion of the Unbeliever, sin still remains Master of the powers of his heart, and is only withstood by self-love, which fears the consequents of sin, and hath therefore no aversion to sin but what arises from that fear.

But a true Christian hath conceived a real aversion against sin it self, and watches and fights against gain

gainst it, not only in the Idea of its ill consequences, but the proper Idea of its mischief, as the greatest Enemy of Man's Excellency, and so abominable, that it must naturally be the object of God's hate. When then an unregenerate Man hopes, he is transported to see that happy day, which shall deliver him from all the punishments due to his sin, and put him in possession of a Celestial Life, and Immortality. But a true Believer goes further, he is ravished with the thoughts of that happy day, which shall deliver him fully from sin it self, which is as a load and burthen that presses him down, and as a Disease of which he ardently desires a Cure.

I come to Charity : Every one knows that it hath two Objects,  
D
God



God and our Neighbour. And  
 for that which respects God, we  
 cannot in my opinion deny, but  
 a temporal Believer, that is to say,  
 a Man of the number of thole  
 whom Jesus Christ describes in  
 the parable of the sower, who  
 believe not, but for a season, may  
 sometimes have some light senti-  
 ments of love to God; but they  
 are very different from those  
 which a true regenerate Man hath.  
 As the first ever loves himself  
 more then God, all that he per-  
 ceives o' love to God, consists in  
 nothing but some acts of acknow-  
 ledgement, for the things he hopes  
 for, and these motions are nei-  
 ther very lively nor very deep  
 for a Soul which is not yet truly  
 Converted, is always ungrateful.  
 But a true Believer perceiv's him-  
 self infinitely obliged to his God  
 not

not only for the good things he hath received, and for those which he hopes for, but principally because God hath loved him out of pure mercy, without his having any manner of merit in him, and when he was altogether worthy of his hatred.

Again he loves God with that love which they call a love of respect, and esteem, which is founded upon the ineffable perfections of the Divinity, which renders it infinitely worthy of the love of all Creatures: He loves him with a love of desire, which is that which *David* hath so well expressed in the 42 Psalm, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so longeth my Soul after thee O God; my soul is a thirst for God, yea, even for the living God, when shall I come and appear before the*  
D 2 *presence*

*presence of God.* He loves him with a love of proximity, and relation, considering him as his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Father: In fine, he loves him with that which we call a love of service, for he would bring all his life, all his thoughts, his words and actions to the glory of God, as the last end, which he ought to have always before his Eyes.

This true and solid love which the faithful Christian hath for God discovers it self, principally in those occasions where the name of God, or his Son Jesus Christ is either glorified or dishonoured by others. For at such conjunctures, an Unregenerate Man will be sure to have regard to the interest, that he may make in the actions of others, and if he find himself concerned in per-  
son,



son, or imagines he may receive a prejudice from it, he will have a vexation and displeasure, although they honour God, and if they do dishonour God, he will have joy if he find advantage to himself by it. For as I have often repeated before Self-love rules, and reigns in an heart that is not yet truly Converted.

-A true Believer on the contrary, never sees any actions wherein God is in the least manner glorified without joy; nor sees others ever dishonour him, without having a sensible displeasure, whether they make to his own Personal interest, or not, he is not much concerned, but always finds himself sufficiently satisfied in the interest of God. 'Tis a Character which we see in the Charity of St. Paul, when he was in Athens

he saw in that City a number of reigning Superstitions, the History observes, that his Spirit was exasperated at the view of those false devotions, which nevertheless did not personally offend him. And on the other side he saw many stirred up with jealousy against him, who preached the Gospel out of a principle of Vain-glory; whatsoever personal interest he had against the action of those persons, who seemed to take a part of the honour of his Apostleship from him, yet he was joyful to see that the Gospel nevertheless was preached. Some indeed,

Philip. *says he. preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will.*

*The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of*

*of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I herein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.*

As to the second object of Charity, which is our Neighbour, I confess that Justice, Temperance, Mildness, Compassion, are moral Vertues, that may be found in unregenerate Persons. The same distinctions which we give to those St. Paul calls the Household of Faith, false Religions have also; a Pagan indisputably shall more love a Pagan; and a Mahometan a Mahometan, then one of another Religion, for bare conformity of manners and opinions, makes that effect. Nevertheless it is certain that true Piety in this very instance hath something



more peculiar whereby it may be known. It loves all Men in general, because the Image of God is in them, which principally makes them amiable: 2. The more it sees of that Image, and resemblance in them, the more it loves such persons. One mark of a Religious Man, is to love Religious persons, to seek out an acquaintance, and have a familiarity with them, and to be ready to serve them. 3. True Piety, to speak fully, hates no person. A Religious Man may be subject to present resentments, and sudden anger, and transports, but they will not last long: for Charity will return, and conquer those frailties, and therefore it is the worst sign, that we can discover in a Man, to see him have a Soul that continues long in an implacable

cable hatred and resentment ; and on the contrary, one of the certainest and best signs is, to be inclinable to pardon, and ready to forgive. But this frailty, must not proceed from stupidity, nor lightness of Spirit, it ought to be accompanied with a just sense of the injury we have received, and proceed from a desire to do our duty, and from an imitation of God, who daily pardons us infinite sins.

A fourth vertue about which it is good to examine ones self, is prayer. Not but that false and unsincere Christians may pray to God, and they may pray sometimes with more ardour and transport, then those that are truly pious. But commonly their prayers are for Temporal interests. They are not much fixed

upon the three first Petitions of the Lord's-Prayer, *Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* Neither have they any great zeal in begging of God the grace of his holy Spirit, nor ever feel that secret joy, which springs from the approaches unto God, nor that sweet confidence which we have in his goodness. It is otherwise with a Man that is truly holy, In his prayers he will never omit recommending his Temporal condition to God, yet with an entire submission to the order of his providence: But principally he will be sure to ask of him those things which his Piety makes him wish for, *viz.* The glory of God, and his own Sanctification. His prayer afterwards is usually ended with a  
 holy



holy joy, and an absolute confidence of the goodness of God, as we see in many of the Psalms, where after having begun with sad complaints, and languishing expressions, they end with admirable assurances, and perfect re-establishments of joy, as you may see in the 6, 13, 22, 31, and 42. Psalms.

I conclude this Chapter then, saying, That if you would have the profit I designed it for, you must not be content with the bare reading it over, but you must meditate all the parts of it, well comprehending its sense and substance, penetrating all the principles therein. But above all it is necessary to make Application thereof, which reducing it into practice to your self, by examining with all exactness every point

point of it, according to all the extent of the direction which I have set down. I confess that to acquit ones self, there will be more time required, then that which is allowed to the more common Acts of Devotion: for this cannot be reduced into the work of a day, or two. But if we lay the work of our Salvation very seriously to our hearts, we shall not repine at those moments we employ in the assuring our selves thereof; and if we were not absolutely stupid, or brutal, we shall be heartily glad to understand our selves well, upon a subject that is of greater importance then this life.

## CHAP. V.

*The fourth Rule. To consider ones self in the different Conditions that one happens to be in.*

**O**Ne of the Principal parts of this Examination, is to endeavour the knowing of our selves in the different states and conditions of our life, in our afflictions, prosperities, poverties, abundance, abasements, elevations, sicknesses and health. For these states particularly our heart discovers it self as it is.

A Worldly Man in his prosperity, whatever Moral or Civil Vertue he hath, or whatever disposition towards Piety, can scarce forbear forgetting himself, and falling into a negligence of Religion



ligion and Devotion, into Pride, into a trusting in his Riches, into Luxury, into despising of his Inferiours and Equals; In fine, into giving a free Career to all his passions. Self-love which then Reigns over him by the flattery of his good successes, and the high condition he is in, making the whole World favourable unto him, he abandons, and gives himself up unto it without all limits or resistance. But a good Christian doth not so, for in the affluence of any Temporal prosperities, he lifts up his heart still towards God, and acknowledges him for the Author of them, humbling himself the more in his sight, for the higher favours he receives from his hand, by the true sense of his own unworthiness, he preserves in that estate the ballance of

of justice and equity, not abusing the advantage that he hath, but making them subservient to the furthering of his sanctification. Temporal prosperity often spoils good Men, and casts them sometimes into a neglect of their Salvation. into ingratitude towards God, debaucheries, injustice, yet it is certain, that if they be truly good, they keep some measure in these excesses: Because, if prosperity on the one side favour the reliques of natural corruption, grace on the other hand suffers not it self to be wholly lost, it opposeth the licentiousness of the flesh, and hinders them from being overflowed with it. And there is ever a tacit resistance, which one may percieve in the bottom of ones heart, though at the same time it remains in a manner

manner subdued. They have also some intervals, wherein the spirit returns to himself, and then they make reflection upon the vanity of the things of this World and their own frailty, and from these reflections ordinarily arise the motions of returning to God and Repentance.

It is very important then for a Man to examine himself well upon this account, and see how he hath governed himself in his greatest prosperities, how he hath received them, and what hath been his gratitude towards God; what fruit of sanctification he hath drawn from them, or what abuses he hath made of them; what combats he hath felt in his heart upon those abuses, what measure he hath kept in his excesses, and what reflections after-

ward



wards he hath made upon himself, and what Repentance hath followed.

In the afflictions of the World an unregenerate Man usually loseth that little joy and confidence that he had in the grace of God, and easily perswades himself, God loves him not, since he hath permitted those misfortunes which hath happened to him. In this state he commonly acts according to his habitudes or his temper ; if that be fiery and impetuous, the affliction doth but provoke and enrage him against God, it exasperates him against Men, he murmurs against Providence, he hatches violent resentments, he meditates revenges. But if his humour be a little moderater, he turns to humane means, to seek some remedy for his evil, he

he applies to that only all the light of his prudence; if he be fearful, and of a mean spirit, he runs into complaints and regrets, and seeks his consolation in Tears and Do'ours. If he be endued with principles of Philosophy, he throws himself into a Savage hardnets, and endeavours to fashion himself into an indifference, and insensibility both of good and evil. If the principles of the Christian Religion have made any considerable impression upon him, he turns himself to Prayer. But it is barely upon the prospect of being delivered from his affliction, and not from any true grief that he hath for having offended God; and to have drawn those marks of disgrace upon himself, so far is he from acting with a stable resolution to correct himself.

self for the time to come. But these are not Characters of true Piety : for a Regenerate person feeling in his afflictions the evil which presses him, looks upon it at first as a sign of the Divine Anger, which he hath drawn upon himself. Then reflecting upon his sins, and the abuses which he hath thrown upon the favours that he hath received from Heaven, he condemns himself and conceives so pungent a grief for comporting himself so ill, that he looks back with horror upon his Extravagancies, and the just wrath of God, and is so far from murmuring against his Providence, that he acknowledges and owns his righteous Power, Wisdom and Justice. He recalls into his memory all the graces he hath received, and all the consolations he



he hath felt in his Communion with God: All the motives he had to serve him, and to fear him, and these things create a sensible grief in him, that he hath so failed in his duty, and a sincere design to amend himself; in fine, he returns to God with all humility, and though he looks upon him as in fury, yet he is perswaded of his love, and speaks unto him as *Job* did; *Job 13. 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* He prays to him, but the principal subject of his prayer is to obtain the remission of his sins, and sanctifying grace for the time to come. In regard of his present affliction, he bears it constantly, and after having dried up the present Tears of Nature, he raises his courage, regains his spirit, and stops the course

course of his grief, not by a principle of I know not what Philosophick insensibility, which is only Brutality and Pride; but by that of a holy resignation to the Will of God, knowing that the affliction it self, when it shall be made a right use of, will turn to his profit, *Since all things*

*work together for good to* Rom. 8.  
*them that love God.* He neglects not humane means, when he sees them proper for his deliverance: but at the same time he makes use of them, he continually implores the blessing of God upon them, and looks upon them as an order of Providence.

A wicked Man, one that is not really Regenerated, makes no scruple to use for his deliverance, sinful and illegitimate means: But a good Man will reject them  
 with

with indignation, remembering that his chief end is not to deliver himself from the affliction, but to appease God, and be restored into his favour. As to the second causes from whence the affliction proceeds, he looks not upon them with desires and designs of revenge; but he pardons them as he desires that God should pardon him; and fastens his eyes only upon his own faults, and upon the justice of the scourge from above, which are the principle and first causes of his affliction; he condemns the first, and adores the last; to thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness, to me shame and confusion of face.

If afflictions come for the profession of the Gospel, and Religion hath drawn some sufferings upon them from the Worldly party.



ty, a false Christian behaves himself in another manner than the faithful; for he will endeavour presently to accommodate himself to the times, that he may cover himself in the storm. He will be always ready to submit, and to dissemble, and to swimme with the Stream; and to this end to enlarge the bounds of his Conscience, he will condemn as rigid and scrupulous, those who in the matters of Conscience and Piety, will not yield at all. When these compliances will not serve turn; he will enrage himself against the persecution, he will call to his help, hatred, anger, passion, sedition, and all that flesh and blood shall suggest to him, to resist evil with evil, and injury with injury. In fine, if all this be too little, and he cannot by these

these ways deliver himself from the affliction, he will grow weary, he will rebuke himself for suffering, he will begin to look upon the profession of the Gospel, as the most odious thing, which deprives him of his repose, of his goods, of his pleasures, which are his great interests, he will esteem it as a bar in his way, which stops his designs, and which crosses all his hopes, and then quickly follows his absolute, and open desertion of Religion: For as we have already said, it is self-love, that is to say, an Earthly and Worldly love, which ever reigns in his heart, and which possesses the first place there.

As to the true faithful Christian, his conduct, is very different in these sad occasions. First, he looks upon afflictions, as the ordinary

dinary consequences of the true Religion, and in stead of being scandalized, he is the more confirmed. He lays up in his heart all that Jesus Christ and his Apostles hath laid upon this subject.

If any one will come after me, let him deny him-

Matth. 16.

self, and take up his cross and follow me. If ye were of the World, the World would love his

John 15.

own, but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, the World hateth you. Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake, but

Matth. 10.

he that holdeth out to the end shall be saved. That through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of

Acts 14.

God. If we dye with Christ, we shall also live with him if we suffer with him, we

2 Tim 2.

E

shall



shall also reign with him. All

2 Tim. 3. those who will live godly  
in Christ Jesus must suffer  
persecution. The Lord chasten-

Heb. 12. eth every one whom he loves, and  
scourgeth every Son whom  
he receiveth. If ye en-

dure chastisement, God dealeth with  
you as with Children; for what Son  
is he whom the Father chastiseth  
not. Beloved, think it not strange

1 Pet. 4. concerning the fiery tryal,  
which is to try you, as  
though some strange thing happen-  
ed unto you, but rejoyce, in as much  
as ye are partakers of Christs suf-  
ferings.

Secondly, he represents to him-  
self afflictions, in all their beauty  
and worth, that he might not be  
shaken, to wit, as they are a con-  
formity to Jesus Christ; looking  
saith the Apostle, to Jesus the Au-  
thor

thor and finisher of our faith, who,  
 for the joy that was set before him,  
 endured the Cross, and despised the  
 shame; as we have in them the  
 honour of sustaining the cause of  
 God, and of his Gospel. Unto  
 you it is given on the be- Phil. 1. 29.  
 half of Christ, not only to  
 believe on him, but also to suffer  
 for his sake. As they are steps  
 which raise us to the Kingdom of  
 Heaven. Our light afflictions which  
 are but for a moment, work 2 Cor. 4.  
 out for us an exceeding  
 and Eternal weight of glory. As  
 they are a means to make mani-  
 fest the price and excellency of  
 our faith, and our piety. That  
 the tryal of your faith being much  
 more precious then of Gold which  
 perisheth, though it be 1 Pet. 1. 7.  
 tryed with fire, might be  
 found unto praise, and honour, and  
 glory

( 92 )  
glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. As they are occasions which God often takes wherein he glorifies his Wisdom, and his Power, in the preservation of his Church. *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt.* As they are usually accompanied with a new degree of grace, which God bestows upon his Children; *But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.* As they are necessary chastisements for our amendment. *Before I was afflicted, I went wrong, but now I have*

Isa. 43 2.

1 Cor. 10.  
13.



*have kept thy word.* Thus the true Believer looking upon the sufferances of the Church with these prospects, in lieu of being troubled, or dejected, he draws from them matter of joy and glory, according to the sense of *St. Paul*, when he said, *But we glory in our tribulation.* Rom. 5.

In the third place, he is incapable of making any breach in his Conscience, to deliver himself from it; though indeed he exposes not himself unto it: Or anticipates his Calamities by casting himself rashly into them, for that would be to tempt God. Nay, he flies from them, and avoids them as much as he can lawfully; but would be very sorry to exempt himself from them by any wicked way, or to seek his rest by any relaxation of his Consci-

ence, or any act of hypocrisie; knowing that an upright heart, and tongue, and works, are the most agreeable things in the World to God. And that he that would have us as wise as Serpents, will also have us as innocent as Doves. Knowing moreover that such kind of byassings are not only contrary to Christian simplicity, which never permits us to do the least violence to our Conscience, under any pretence whatever, but they are also very contrary to true prudence. For besides their drawing us from under the conduct of God's blessing, they make us fall into reproachful baseness, which gives the World opportunity to press things further in hopes of succeeding, so that the surest way to be ever wise as Serpents, is to be innocent as Doves, Fourth.

Fourthly, They fall not into that other inconvenience, which is so ordinary to unbelievers, who take sanctuary in Furies, in Seditions, in Cruelties and in Criminal Violences, to repell their Persecution. Yet he will not neglect an apology for his Cause, for that is natural, just, and allowable. But he will practise no unjust and culpable ways, though he should find them never so facile: For he remembers the example of Christ Jesus his Saviour, *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth Righteously.*

In fine, if the affliction lasts long, he bears it patiently, without emancipating himself; but encourages his Piety, to stop the



Current of his natural Tears, and Complaints, but however he is far from conceiving the least rebate, or aversion to the Religion, which draws these sufferings upon him. And with St. Paul says, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present World* Rom. 8. *are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* Remembring that St. Fohn writes, *And to him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of Paradise.*

I confess it may happen that a good Man may sometimes be surprized, and overwhelmed, as it were, with the first motions of fear, or hope, or some other illusions, which may present Extraordinary and unforeseen Objects unto him, as once St. Peter was, but

but such funestous accidents have always three Characters; one, that the heart resists them, and inwardly Combats what the mouth utters, they are those kind of acts which are called acts of constraint; not but that they are in some respects indeed voluntary, but they are voluntary in respect of the weakness of the Will, which is not strong enough to support it self, and so is led away with its faintness, so that he doth the ill which he would not, and abhors it when he commits it. The other Character is, that these failures continue not long in them, for as soon as the heart recollects she gets up again by a sincere Repentance: And turning her Eyes upon Jesus Christ, they meet with his, which pierce the Soul. What hast thou done, say those terrible

ok, what hast thou done, weak  
 and ungrateful Servant ? Thou  
 hast abandoned thy Conscience,  
 and betrayed the rich Treasure of  
 my Truth, Thou hast injured my  
 Grace, and art become unworthy  
 of my Salvation. Give me an  
 account of the sprinkling of my  
 Blood, and grieving of the Spirit  
 of Sanctification, which I had ho-  
 noured thee with. Then in an  
 instant all objects that were be-  
 fore him are changed, and the  
 light becomes darkness unto him,  
 and the dumbest and dearest Crea-  
 tures have mouths opened against  
 him, to reproach his Crimes.  
 And thence comes sighs, and the  
 bitterest Cries from his Soul. My  
 God, says he, my Saviour, have  
 mercy upon me, correct me not  
 in thine anger, neither chastise me  
 in thy fury. And so his contrite  
 Repen



Repentance never ceases till it hath absolutely repaired his Evil. To this may be added a third Character, which is, That these sad accidents cannot, at the most, happen above once to a true Believer; for the horreur of such enormous faults cannot easily be blotted out of the memory; and as I have said before, his Piety fortifies it self, in its weakest places, and in those parts where it hath been lyable to fail, and so is out of an estate of being again surprized.

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## CHAP. VI.

*Fifth Rule. To consider ones self in the resistance that he hath made, in some strong Temptation.*

**T**Here are but very few persons that make profession of Piety, if they be endued with

any qualities that gives them any consideration in the World, but they have light upon some dangerous accidents, wherein their Vertue and Faith have not been put to a proof, though by the Grace of God they have not sunk under it. And I would wish them to lay hold of such an opportunitie, to understand themselves well in, and for that purpose, let them make an exact reflection how they untangled and freed themselves from such snares. For it will greatly contribute to the intended Examination.

If then they have been placed sometimes in great and strong Temptations of the World; as for Example, if persons of high Power and Authority, persons amiable and dear, have imploy'd all the sweetnesse of their friendship,

ship, and all other motives that are used upon such occasions, to incline us to a change of Religion, or ingage us into some wicked intrigue: in a word, to tempt us to make a Ship-wrack of our Vertue, and probity, by all manner of means; if one has been firm and unmoveable in such an instance, 'tis a very good sign of the sincerity of our Regeneration. For neither the strength of our Tempter, nor single Moral, or Civil Vertue, nor the bare dispositions towards Piety, are not capable of resisting a great interest, of establishing a Family, or a splendid Elevation, or the alluring Charms of tender friendship, and a powerful perswasion.

But you must not stop here, for it may happen sometimes that a Man may defend himself  
from



from these temptations, either out of humour without being able to give a good reason; or some sentiment of vain glory, whereby he thinks some honour, and merit, redounds to himself, or by some helps of Birth and Education, or some considerations of esteem and friendship, which they may have for others: though I confess this happens very rarely, or never, to persons that have any little degree of reason. Can a Soul possess with Self-love, in whom the Ideas of the World rule, be capable of standing firm, against a great hope, that is certain, and present, which operates with all those things which have the ascendancy over the Spirit, and all the allurements that can engage the heart? Can it, I say, resist them with a bare obstinacy, or a feigned joy

joy of Contradiction, or the slender bands of good Birth, or Education, which lose most of their strength as soon as one gets out of ones Child-hood, or by consideration of esteem, and humane friendship, which are seldom very efficacious? 'Tis much more to be presumed, and more just to believe, that the Idea of God only is capable of triumphing ever these objects. Nevertheless I will suppose that it is possible, and wish that every one would Examine themselves upon this supposition: That they would recollect their memories, what they have felt upon such grand Occurrences, and if they find they have been victorious by the solidity of Vertue, and by the fear of God, when they have had promises of advancement in their largest

largest extent, when there hath been no doubt, nor revocation of them, nay, when there hath not been an insensibilitie of the obliging Charms \* which they have been graced with, and yet if they have been Conquered, by placing the greatest interest upon Piety, and setting that in Opposition against all Temporal interest, and that the suavities of the grace of God hath swallowed up all humane blandishments; then you need not be dubious, you may be satisfied of your heart, and be assured, that it is the product of a true regeneration: It is not an effect of flesh and blood, 'tis the effect of the Spirit, and an assistance received from above. I shall only add, that if the Temptation hath not been momentary, but of a long continuance, and  
 that



that with the address, and strength there hath also been added much assiduity, the judgment that is made of such a victory, is certain and demonstrative.

These kind proofs are excellent touch-stones wherewith we may attain to the knowledge of themselves, and when a Pious Man hath had the experience of them he ought to bless God, and acknowledge his goodness that hath allowed him so blest an opportunity to shew his duty towards him, and to assure himself of his Salvation, and again to bless him for upholding him in so great a Combat. He must also adore the ways of his Wisdom, and Divine Providence, in regard of his Children, that employs such Master-pieces of his Power, to Seal more firmly upon their Souls the truth

truth of their Election. Men have their ends, but God, in the very permitting them to act Conformably to their own intentions, make use of their Ministry to bring to pass the very contrary of that which they thought and designed; how happy is a righteous Man, when God is pleased in this manner to deal with him.

Notwithstanding he must take great care not to abuse such reflections, for, if under the pretence that a Man is happy, when he hath undergone such tryals, he should imagine that he ought to seek for them, and to that purpose should expose himself voluntarily unto them, it would be the highest temerity, and a Crime that would not go unpunished. One cannot too much distrust ones own weakness, and with-  
out

out an extraordinary Revelation, none can promise themselves Gods assistance at the moment of danger, much less that he will help him when he runs into it in stead of avoiding it. If it were only to humble and chastise us, for our so great presumption, it may be that God will purposely deliver us up to our own infirmity, and it is more likely that he will deal so with us, rather then sustain us, when we are so audacious, as to go brave our perils and dangers. We must then endeavour to avoid such kind of temptations, fly from all things that may lead us into them, and rather lean towards the ballast of fear, then audacity. But when ever it pleases God to call us unto them by the inevitable course of his Providence, 'tis then



then that we are obliged to muster up all our Courage, and then we may rely upon the assistance and help of the Holy Spirit.

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## CHAP. VII.

*The seventh Rule. To Examine the progress one hath made, and to compare ones Piety with superstitions.*

**T**O forget nothing which is necessary in this Examination, one must consider ones self, in my opinion, in all the several Ages of our lives, to see the progresses we have made in Holiness, and Christian piety. For if we find that we have been formerly subject to such or such Vices, and such or such Failings; and that we have corrected the Consequences

quences of them, by the care we have applied, or by the fear of God, and Religious principles, 'tis a good sign. All Piety hath its weakneses, and imperfections, but they resemble those of Childhood, which are bettered every day, and not like those of Age, which grow on to a custom. All unregenerate Man is like a Setting Sun, whose light and lustre diminishes by little and little, and suddenly sets into night, and darkness; or a sick person, who dies by Inches, and insensibly draws near to his Sepulchre. But a true Christian, quite otherwise, is like the Rising Sun, who ascends, and gains strength as he mounts higher and higher; he is a sick person indeed, but in his recovery, who though yet weak, gathers strength every day, and gains some-

something upon his Disease, being advancing by degrees towards his Health and Recovery from Glory to Glory, saith St. Paul, and from Faith to Faith, which expression notes the inseparable increase of true Regeneration.

If then in our Examination of our selves, we can but find out this Character, let us rejoyce in the Grace of God, for it is one of the happiest Indications we can wish. But, if on the contrary, we make no progress, but go back instead of advancing, and return daily to the World from which the Divine Vocation ought to separate us, 'tis a sad and funestom sign: And therefore the Apostle scarce speaks in all his Epistles of any thing but of encreasing, and going forwards. *Be ye filled,* saith he, *with the knowledge of the*



Col. the 1.

Will of God, in all Wisdom, and Spiritual Understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitfull in every good work; and increasing in the knowledge of God. And in another place, he says, From whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted Ephes. 4. by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love. And in his Epistle to the Philippians, he proposes himself as an Example on this point; Forgetting, saith he, those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are Philip. 3. before: I press towards the mark for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.

But

But above all that we have said hitherto, it is most important to compare true Piety with superstitious Piety, that we might make a judgment from thence. For if we cast our eyes upon false Religions, at the first sight, they look as if they made as great impression upon the heart of their votaries, as true Religion can make upon the heart of the faithful; one sees in both a like good intention, an equal zeal, and a readiness for all which they esteem to be for the glory of God. Each of them serve him in their own way, according to the Idea they have formed of him, and endeavour by the fear of him, to live without reproach amongst Men. 'tis therefore very necessary to distinguish this, for our better Consolation, and the better

establishment

establish our Piety in all regards.

First then, That which a Superstitious Person calls Piety and Devotion, consists for the most part in vicious actions, which cannot be agreeable to God, and a deluded Conscience often performs them. Their good intention is abused, their zeal is without knowledge, and their Prayers are injurious to God; nay their very promptitude to serve him, is but a readiness to dishonour him in effect: For what honour, I beseech you, can we do to God, when we imagine Childish actions are delightful unto him, as all Superstitious actions are, which a Worldly wise man himself can make no account of? What honour can accrue to him in fancy-

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ing,



ing, as a Superstitious Man doth, that one sins and offends the Divine Majesty of God, by indifferent actions, which have nothing in themselves that is vicious, or irregular, and nevertheless they make them matters of Conscience? What honour can redound to him in giving him that Worship, which corrupts that Spiritual, Immaterial and infinite Idea which we ought to have of him, according to the verity of his Nature? What honour is it to him, to use those acts of Religion which supposes in a Creature a participation of that Infinity which is so very peculiar to God that it cannot be Communicated to any other but himself? What honour is it to him to imagine to appease his Wrath, or expiate

sins by actions , which have no  
 proportion, either with our Of-  
 fences, or his Justice? What ho-  
 nour can it be to him, when in-  
 stead of that Worship which Christ  
 Jesus calls worshipping him in  
 Spirit, and in Truth, which is in-  
 deed only worthy of God, we use  
 only a Worship of Pomp and  
 Worldly Magnificence , which  
 consists in Exterior things, and  
 wholly inveagles the Senses?  
 What honour can be done to him  
 when we make part of his Wor-  
 ship and our Devotions to redound  
 upon dead and inanimate Crea-  
 tures, which we make, as it were,  
 Interposers between him and us?  
 What honour do we do him,  
 when we establish his service, not  
 singly in those things he hath  
 commanded us, but in voluntary

Devotions, which are the inventions of Men, and have no other recommendation but humane Authority ? 'Tis then certain, That any man who reflects upon these things, and finds his Piety and Devotion of another Classis and Order, disingaged, free and purified from this dross, which is not Evangelical, hath great cause of joy, and reason to bless God for having shewed him a better way.

'Tis fit nevertheless to make two Observations here, the one of which is, That although we profess a Religion whose Worship is pure, yet let us watch lest we fall into Superstition, which we figure to our selves, that it is sufficient to practise exterior actions, to acquit our selves of duty.



duties of Religion, as goings into publick Congregations, attentively hearing of the Word of God, and being regularly present at Prayers, and other things of that nature; I say, we must not fancy these acts to be the chief, and principal actions of Devotion: For it would be changing of good into evil, for these acts though good in their bare use, which is to be signs and exercises of the inward Devotion of the Soul, and means of confirming, or advancing us in Piety, become absolutely Superstitious, when we make them the Totals, or Capitals of Piety, because the truth of God and his Essence consists in an interior Worship.

The second Observation is to be concerning another abuse, that

we may fall into that is not less pernicious, *viz.* To imagine that all these acts of outward Devotion are not necessary in the service of God, that we may neglect them without troubling our Conscience, under the pretence that they are not the principal, and may be abused and turned into Superstition: For indeed though they be not essentials of true Piety and Holiness, yet nevertheless they are indispensably necessary from the reasons I mentioned before, which is, that they are signs and exercises of our Piety and Devotion, and good means of confirming us. Therefore a true Regenerate Man equally avoids both these Rocks; his inward Soul is Consecrated unto God, but nevertheless he neglects  
not

not outward Worship and Devotion.

In the second place, I say that the Devotion of a superstitious Person differs from a righteous Mans in the Impressions which they both make in the heart, and in the effects likewise which they produce from it. As for Example, you must not imagine that the perswasion that we have of error, is equal to that we have of truth. I know that St. Paul says, *That God for this cause shall send them strong delusion, that 2 Thes. 2 they should believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth.* But that designs not a parity of Efficacy; for a deceived Spirit is like a Man asleep, who raves after the images of his dreams, who



is not sensible of the falseness of them, yet nevertheless cannot have the confidence of them, as a man fully awake hath in those objects he sees or feels. 'Tis ignorance, pre-occupation, and confusion, that produces a false persuasion; but light and distinction brings forth a true sentiment.

I say also the same of Confidence and Trust, that which a sincere Piety gives, hath another manner of force then that which comes from Superstition; for the first is an inward voice from God, which makes it self known to the Conscience of Man, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost; But the second is only an imagination that hath no solidity, for it is an amusing of the Conscience, which charms, as one may say, its inquiries

rude

tudes for some time, and diverts its troubles; but the first is a true Tranquillity, a Peace which removes all occasions of fear, and substitutes in their place causes of Joy and Consolation. This is a Peace which ariseth from the experience of consideration, and which bears up it self on all occasions when it ought to display its vertue; whereas the other will certainly sink down, if it be put to the tryal; that is to say, if we search carefully into the grounds and principles, that it hath to defend it self against terrible objects. A false Confidence vanishes and forsakes a Man in great afflictions, in the approaches of Death and Judgement; whereas a true one endures at those times and Triumphs.

Concerning the love of God, if we may say Superstition Inspires any sentiments of it, we must not doubt but they are very different from those of a true Christian. For this love is wholly in the superiour part of the Soul, wholly in the new Man, wholly purified from earthly things, wholly disengaged from the Senses. But that of a superstitious Man hath its principal seat in the passions; it is rather Carnal then Spiritual, and hath more of Sense than Religion. From whence it comes to pass, that this last is ordinarily indiscreet and imperious, like to the flame of a Feavour, or the violence of Torrent; Whereas the true one is more calm, like to natural heat, or to a River which  
runs



runs softly. That of the superstitious Man is absolutely of the same nature with its principle; such a is the Idea which he hath of God, such is the love which ariseth from it. Again as we have said, the perswasion that we have of Error, is very much weaker then that which we have of truth, so we must acknowledge that this love which Error produceth, never possesseth the heart with that force, nor is so firmly rooted as a sincere and true one; this last penetrates and reigns there; the other, if I dare so express my self, possesses only the superficies, whilst self love always keeps the first rank, and dwells in the bottom.

This is then beyond all these differences, and in general, beyond all

all the Characters that I have given hitherto, which I define that a Man examine himself by, if he would know himself well, and be assured of the truth of his Regeneration; not that I pretend that all the World is capable of following exactly these Rules after one another, nor of examining themselves punctually by them; for this requires knowledge and experience: and how many are there which have but little of either, and yet in their simplicity, they continue to live in the fear of God, to feel a sense of him in their Souls. But if they are not altogether proper for the less, yet they may serve however those who have some rise and advancement in knowledge, and if they will but be attentive, I hope there

there will be but few persons, who will not reap some fruit from them.

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## CHAP. VIII.

*The eighth Rule. To Examine ones present State.*

**A**fter having examined that great question, whether we are, or are not true Christians, whether we have, or have not a true Communion with Jesus Christ ; we must go on further and before we undertake to draw near to the Holy Table , when we shall have supposed that we are truly regenerated , we must know also what is the present estate of our Souls. For a true Christian may be in two different states



states, in an estate of Righteousness, or in an estate of Sin ; in an estate of Peace with God, rejoycing without any obstructions in the sentiments of his love, and of his favour ; or in an estate of disgrace and trouble with God, cast away from his presence, and deprived of the marks of his good will and favour. *David* before his Crime of Adultery with *Bathsheba*, and his Murdering *Uriah* was in the first state, and in the second after he was fallen into those enormous sins. *St. Peter* was in the first when Christ admitted him to the Holy Supper, which he celebrated at the Passover with his Disciples, and fell into the second a few hours after, when he denyed his Master in the Palace of the High Priest. 'Tis then

then very necessary before we come to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that we Examine our selves again about this Article. For 'tis certain that we very often fall into faults, which are more or less considerable, which loosens the state of our Righteousness, and draws upon us the wrath of God: and the worst of all is, that we fall asleep as it were in it, either from our hearts loving to deceive it self therein, or some other ill principle. However it comes, we often take no heed that we are fallen into Crimes: Or if we do take notice of it, we diminish the Idea of them, and are but a little troubled. And if we come in that state to the Communion, we must not doubt but we receive it unworthily,

worthily, and draw down punishments in stead of Divine Benedictions upon our selves.

But you will say, what then, is there any state of a true Christian whilst he is in this World, that may be called a state of Righteousness? Is it possible that we may be sometimes free from sin? Is it not the perpetual condition of the just Man to fall seven times a day? And doth not St. John say,

*If we say that we have no sin,  
1 Joh. 1. we deceive our selves, and  
the truth is not in us?* It

seems then we cannot make this distinction of two states of a Christian, one of Righteousness, and the other of Sin, since indeed we are ever in sin, and have ever need to say what Jesus Christ hath put in our Mouths, *Forgive us our trespasses.*



I answer, that it is true, we can never have a full and perfect righteousness, whilst we are in this World, and this is that which we have supposed from the beginning of this Treatise. It is not that which we understand by this state of Righteousness, which we speak. There are two sorts of sins, some which are much more light, and others which are more enormous; some which much less offend the true form of Regeneration, and Combat it more at a distance, others which are much more contrary, and more directly opposit to it; some for which the Conscience hath more horror, and others for which it hath less. For Example, we will conclude, that an idle word, or a lye about indifferent things, an ex-  
cels

cess of divertisement, an indiscretion, are things which much less oppose true Piety and Justice, than the committing of a Murder, or Perjury, or Calumny, or a violent transport of Passion, or Infidelity. When then a Man finds himself not guilty of any of these sorts of Crimes, we call that a state of Righteousness, not that to speak properly it hath no sins, but because a Man finds himself not charged with any of those great faults, which deprive him of the actual sense of God's love, and put him under his fatherly anger.

To Examine a Man's self well upon this point, we must not insist simply upon notorious Crimes, which humane Laws themselves punish, as if he ought to believe him-

himself righteous, when he shall find himself neither guilty of Murder, nor Adultery, nor Robbery : He must go further and make reflexions upon the thoughts of his heart, upon the words of his mouth , and the acts of his hands, upon his designs, and his desires, to see if he hath not committed some injustice against his Neighbour, or some impiety against God himself ; and in a word, if he have not dishonoured the Christian Profession by some unworthy thing. This is that which a good Man ought to do every day, but he ought particularly to do when God calls him to the Communion of the Lord's Supper ; since it is upon these holy occasions that we renew our Covenant with God, and if we de-



desire to do it faithfully, we must follow this order.

We should first take the Law of God, and stay upon all the particulars one after another, and consider every one of them in all their extent, and in their divers degrees, and should remember that which is commonly spoken for a general Explication of this Law; to wit, That it commands not only our outward actions as humane Laws do, but also reacheth to the inward motions of the Soul, and the Conscience, which are all known to God; that under the negative Commands, the affirmative are comprized; and under the affirmative, the negative, that is to say, when it forbids us to do any evil. it enjoyns us at the same time to do the contrary

trary good; and when it Commands us to do any good, it forbids us also to do the evil which is opposite to it : That when it remarks any genus of good or evil, it tacitly remarks also all the species of it, That is to say for Example, when it forbids us stealing in general, it forbids all the different manners of seizing upon other Mens Goods : That when it expresses it self in one species, it understands all others of the same order; when it forbids false Witness, it forbids also all other ways by which we may unjustly blacken the reputation of our Neighbour. That when it forbids any evil, or commands any good, it forbids or commands all that which may naturally carry us to it, as when it forbids stealing,

ling, it forbids luxury and excessive expences, because they naturally lead to it. In fine, when it forbids or commands any thing, it forbids or commands all the degrees of it. As when it forbids murder, it forbids hatred, desire of revenge, quarrels, and outrages, which are as degrees of Murther. Thus in applying to our selves this Law, part after part, we may know wherein we have violated it, and wherein we have observed.

2. It will be good also in this Examination to insist, not only upon sins of commission, but also upon sins of omission; that a Man recall before his eyes, the divers occasions which are presented to him, wherein he was obliged to do good, to see in what man-



manner he received them , and how he hath acquitted them, and if he hath not let many pass without hearkening to either his Vocation or his Duty, or the motions of his Conscience. It so much the more concerns us to enter into these considerations, as it is very easie and very ordinary for us to be negligent in it. Most times we believe our selves to be in a very good estate, when we perceive not our selves guilty of any of those great sins , which make a quick impression upon our spirit. But as for sins of omission we have little trouble about them: For such is the nature of our hearts, that we are very much affected with what we do, but little with that which we do not. Yet it is certain that the sins of  
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omission are not little , and that there is but little difference between a Man who kills his Neighbour, and he who by his fault lets him miserably perish, when he is by his Vocation to succour and save him.

3. A good Man must consider himself also in all the relations which he hath with the Civil Society, with the Church, with his Family, with his Profession, according to the rank and degree which he is in. By this means he will easily discover the faults which he hath committed against his duty, and the negligences in to which he might be fallen. In general , we ought in the quality of Men to live soberly, righteously and godly. But there are particular duties to which we are

obliged by these relations; a Father owes a duty to his Children, and a Child to his Father; a Magistrate to the People, and the People to their Magistrate; the Minister to his Flock, and the Flock to their Minister, we owe a duty one to another. It concerns every one then, to see in what manner he hath governed himself towards his Superiours, Inferiours and Equals. If fierceness, or hardness of heart, or passion, or prejudice, or interest, or humane considerations, have not made him commit injustices against his Inferiours. If Envy, Rebellion, the spirit of Liberty, inclination to censure and detractions, have not made him do things contrary to the respect which he owes to his Superiours.

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If



If Ambition, Pride, Jealousie, or Anger have not made him sin against the Law of Charity and Equity which he owes to his Equals.

4. Every one of us in particular must enter into his own Conscience to see therein what manner we have answered the favours that God hath done us. And here we ought to set before our Eyes all these mercies, and consider how great the Divine goodness hath been towards us, how it hath not ceased for so long time, to add blessing to blessing in examining the number, the greatness, the value, we ought to consider all the circumstances which raise them. After this, it will be easie to judge, if we are

not fallen into a black ingratitude, and if we have not given him cause to complain of us, as he did once of his Vineyard, of which he had taken all possible care, and yet it brought forth nothing but wild Grapes.

But it is not only necessary that we examine our selves about our enormous faults, whether of commission or omission, against God, or against Men ; but we must also cast our eyes upon our lesser sins. For though a Man find himself exempt from the first, yet if he be loaden with a great number of those of the second order, we cannot say that he is in a state of Righteousness ; as by the concurrence of many little distempers, a considerable Disease ariseth which puts the life in danger, so

many light offences of divers kinds, make an assembly or body of iniquity, which cannot but bring the just wrath of God upon a Man, and interrupt the course of his Justification; and because these light offences escape the memory, we have the more need after the strictest Examination that we can make to imitate *David*, saying with him, *Who can understand his Errors?* Psal. 19. *Lord cleanse me from my secret faults.*

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## CHAP. IX.

### *The Use of this Examination.*

**T**He Conclusion of this Examination, after we have done it exactly, is the most important



portant of all : For all that we should have performed hitherto, would be very Vain, if we do not reduce all the knowledge we have gained upon our selves to some good use. But what is this use ? That in my opinion no person can be ignorant of. For it is a deep humiliation of our selves in the presence of God, a condemning of our selves before his face, a vigorous and bitter griet for having offended him, a holy and ardent recourse to his Mercies, by the satisfaction and intercession of Jesus Christ. For after we have made this just and necessary scrutiny into our lives : Alas ! we shall find too many causes of Repentance, and esteeming our selves as nothing in his sight, for what Man is there that ought not to

say with the Prophet : *Enter not  
into Judgment with  
Psalm. 143. thy Servant, for in thy  
sight shall no Man liv-  
be justified. ing If thou, Lord, wilt  
be extream to mark  
Psalm. 130. what is done amiss,  
who may abide it? Our*

sins shall arise on all sides, and present themselves before us, they will shew their Number, and their Horrour, and placing them with that Righteousness and perfect Holiness, which the Calling and Gospel of Jesus Christ requires of us, 'tis not possible but our Souls should be much moved and terrified thereby. Yet let us not turn away our eyes, as we are used to do from disagreeable sights; but contrarywise let us fix them well in our sight and Meditations, and draw from them,  
all

all that it is possible to affrighten and confound us. A verbal Confession, an exterior humility, a volatile grief, and a momentary Contrition are not sufficient. There must be an entire, and a sincere Repentance, which wholly takes up the heart, and penetrates the Conscience, if we would have it delightful to God.

After these motions, a hearty and ardent recourse to the Divine Mercies must succeed by the ineffable price of the Blood of our Redeemer, and to this effect, remember the gracious words that God speaks by his Prophet unto us, saying, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his*

Ezek. 33.

may



way, and live. Yea,  
Pfal. 103. Like as a Father pitt-

eth his Children, so is  
the Lord merciful unto them that  
fear him: Look how wide also the  
East is from the West, so far hath  
he set our sins from us. The Lord is  
full of compassion and mercy, long-  
suffering, and of great goodness.

Though your sins be as  
Isaiah 1. Scarlet, they shall be as  
white as Snow. And if

1 John 2 any Man sin, we have  
an Advocate with the  
Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;  
and he is the propitiation for our  
sins. He is able to save

Heb. 7. them to the uttermost,  
that come unto God by

Heb. 4. him. Let us therefore  
come boldly unto the  
Throne of Grace, that we may ob-  
tain

*tain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* But one of the principal effects which our Examination ought to produce, and without which all the rest would be unprofitable, is to take measures and precautions to correct ourselves, and advance our Sanctification. For true Repentance hath two Considerations, one upon things past, the other upon things to come; therefore Jesus Christ who hath joyned them together in the Prayer he taught his Disciples, says of the one side, *Forgive us our sins,* and of the other, *Lead us not into temptation.* Upon this last some precepts may be given, which, if well performed will be of great use.

The first is to apply our spirits as much as it is possible to medi-

tare upon the mysteries of Religion. By which means Religion will become familiar unto us, and by the blessing of God sweeten and temper our Heart and Spirit. These Mysteries are so amiable, that they cannot be often looked into by an eye illuminated with Grace, without learning to esteem and love them. These precepts are so right and strait, that if we often set them before us, they will insensibly rectifie our Souls. 'Tis a strange thing to see how the greatest part of Men are negligent upon this point. There is an infinity of persons, who desire their Salvation, and live likewise in a Sage and Regular way, and have but small things to do, and nevertheless, pass their days away in frivolous employments, and studies



studies of no weight, in stead of  
 employing themselves to the stu-  
 dy of Religion, where they would  
 find pleasure and profit united :  
 if they but know in general, the  
 principal points of the Christian  
 Faith, and read a Chapter or two  
 in the Bible every day, by form  
 and custom without any reflecti-  
 on, these sort of people think they  
 have done enough. Never ta-  
 king notice of what they lose, for  
 the knowledge of Salvation is a  
 Source and Spring of infinite pre-  
 cious things ; which becomes  
 more beautifull, and more admi-  
 rable, the further one proceeds  
 in the quest of it. An ancient Phi-  
 losopher going about to make  
 some definition of the Divinity,  
 said it was a Sphere whose Cen-  
 tre,

tre was every where, and Circumference no where. By which, in my opinion, he would describe the immensity of God. But I had rather say, his Circumference is every where, and his Centre no where, for we may enter into the Meditation of the Divine Mysteries in all places; but being once entred, we find no Centre where the Line finishes; and whereas all other Lines which have a Centre grow narrower, as they approach nearer to it; on the contrary, those of the meditation of God seem always to enlarge themselves wider.

To this precept I will add a second, which is that in the applying ones spirit to things of Religion, if you would have a notable profit from it, you must not be

be contented with an historique knowledge, nor propound to fill your head with heaps of curious Questions, to speak upon the instant, and disput pertinently, but you must turn it to the pratique part, *viz.* To consider them in the prospect of those motives which they will furnish us with, towards our Piety and Righteousness, towards our Charity, and all the other Vertues. As for Example, in stead of amusing ones self to charge ones memory with all that the School treats concerning the Providence of God, how he that is immovable in himself can move all things; how Natural Causes, which neither have Ears nor Reason, can obey the Commands of the first Cause, without any sort of impression,  
or



or Physical Vertue ; how God could permit sin to enter into the World, which hath made such havoc and destruction ; how he could concur in the Criminal actions of any Creature, and not interest his Sanctity, and such like questions : In stead, I say, of bulying ones self with these things, it were better to contemplate his Providence in the views of Practice ; for by these you would learn that God was the Master, and most Sovereign disposer of all events, that it is he which raises, and pulls down every degree , as he pleases ; that he is the Author of Life, and of death, of affliction, and prosperity, of light and darkness, that out of the Treasury of his Grace are issued forth all blessings, happy designs, favourable suc-

successes, unseen assistances, and  
 deliverances in the time of need.  
 And on the contrary, how, out of  
 the Store-houses of his Justice  
 comes all disgraces and misfor-  
 tunes; unhappy projects, funest-  
 ous accidents, subversions of King-  
 doms and Families; which will  
 make us have an Idea of God, fit  
 and worthy of his Divine Ma-  
 jesty. Thereby we shall learn to  
 adore that full and ever vigilant  
 care of his bounties, which thus  
 displays it self for the preservation  
 of all its Creatures, to the very  
 nourishing the Birds of the Air,  
 and cloathing the Lillies of the  
 fields, in their lustre and beau-  
 ty, to the very feeding of the  
 Swallows; By which we shall  
 learn that in all needs and neces-  
 sities,

sities, our prayers must be addressed to him, and to none besides him, since 'tis he alone who hath the whole Government of the Universe in his hands, and imparts it to no person. We shall also learn to give him thanks for all the good we possess, as coming from his liberality, and so to make use of them to his glory, and service, that we abuse them not to gratifie our passions, since it would be the greatest indignity, we could throw upon him, to imploy his own favours that he bestows on us, to dishonour him, and fight against him. We shall also learn to bear our afflictions with patience, and resignation, since they come from the All-powerful hand of God, who hath an absolute right over us, and reigns  
over



over Heaven and Earth. We shall learn to acquiesce in our suffering them, because they are dispensed by an infinite Wisdom, who doth all things well. And we shall also learn to support them with hope, and consolation, remembering that God makes all things turn to the good and advantage of his Children. In fine, we shall learn not to form any unjust designs, and to place no Confidence in Temporal things, since God may take them from us when he pleases, and that from those very breasts from whence we pretended to derive our Joy and Glory, he can bring forth our ruine and disgrace.

Besides it will be good sometimes to gather up, as in one body, as many motives as we can,  
out

out of the Christian Religion, which leads us to the love of God, and to Holiness; for by them a composed Idea will be framed, and a great Image, which will have much more force upon our Spirits, and a much greater impression on our Souls, then if we but consider every motive separately. For notwithstanding our regeneration, we must acknowledge that we are very hardly wrought to the height of Piety. As Physicians therefore when they meet with a body that is difficult to be purged, by prudence, are led to use a stronger remedy, or give a greater quantity then at first; in like manner, we that know our selves hard to be touched inwardly, and brought to performance of spiritual duties, are

are obliged not only to imploy the strongest motives which our Religion furnishes us with to that purpose, but to joyn them all together, that the strength of them united, may engage and gain us to that which single acts of Piety cannot do by themselves.

One can scarce tell what benefit in order to this effect, the bare frequent Meditation of the vanity of all Temporal things is: For as it is they which most commonly seduce, and lead us to sin, 'tis a very great advantage to our Sanctification, to turn our Spirits often to the Consideration of the little value they have in themselves, their fragility, and the weaknesses which they fall into, who fix their hearts upon them



them. It is good to consider in-  
to how many impertinences and  
follies they throw Worldly peo-  
ple, how many useless steps, and  
how many intricate tasks they  
tye upon us, without ever com-  
passing the end of their designs,  
and if they be attained, how sud-  
denly, and grievously death  
comes and defeats it all. 'Tis this  
great representation of death,  
and its necessity, that a regene-  
rate Man ought often to set be-  
fore his eyes, not in a Philosophi-  
cal manner, barely looking upon  
it as the last Line of the durati-  
on of Men. For that view of  
death can produce but two sorts  
of effects in us, which is either  
debaucht thoughts, to emp'oy the  
rest of the time we have to live  
in pleasure, *Let us eat and drink,*

as the *Epicureans* say, for to morrow we shall dye: or thoughts of grief and despair, as it is an evil without remedy. But we must look on it in a **Christian** manner, viz. as accompanied and followed by the Judgment of God, who will in that moment, decide for, or against us, an Eternity of Glory, or an Eternity of Misery and Damnation. We must frequently meditate upon the Eternal miseries in which the Wicked shall be plung'd, to keep our hearts and spirits in fear, for that is a bridle to our passions. We must also raise our thoughts often to the infinite blessings which God hath prepared for us, to the intent and end that what fear hath begun, hope may forward, and love may perfect, we ought also to take notice

tice of what we are most inclined to, that we might precaution ourselves against our infirmities. For 'tis true, that if we do not thus arm our selves, we shall find that we are daily exposed to be surprized by our own weaknesses, one to the Choler which his own temper drives him unto, another to an excess of facility, and complaisance, some by the love of pleasures, and others to several things of the same nature. Therefore 'tis most necessary to make these kind of reflections very often, that we might labour to Conquer our selves, which can hardly be done without some course of time.

The better to attain it, my opinion is, to remove from oneself as much as possibly we can  
the



the objects and occasions which give way to our infirmities to start forth. We must do what 'tis said the *Parthians* do, fly away as we Combat, and distrust our selves. 'Tis in this sense that St. *Paul* bids us work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, not doubting whether God loves us, or whether his promises are true, but doubting whether he will not suffer us to yield under Temptation; for as I have said before, it often happens, that he leaves us to our selves, when we are too proud and confident, that we might be humbled.

To this I shall add another Precept, which I believe to be of great use, which is to be very curious in the choice of those persons with whom we desire to make

make a particular friendship, and to converse with often. For we must not doubt but that we easily receive a tincture from the ways, and the inclinations, and the manners of those we usually converse with, and therefore it imports us greatly to place our friendship well.

Not that I mean, that we ought absolutely retire from the World, and fly from the Society of Men. For God, contrarywise, would have us live with them; and therefore the faithful are called by *St. Paul, Burning lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation*; that solitary, rigid and wildish humour, which in the first Ages of the Church made many retire into Deserts, to fly from the Crowd, and avoid Com-  
merce

merce with worldlings, had a fair enough colour at the first, and I doubt not also there was a good intention therein. Notwithstanding God hath not accompanied it with his blessing, for from thence we see many Superstitions have had birth, which have corrupted the Christian Purity. I believe then that a Regenerate Man, may and ought to live in the World, remembering that he is a Man, that is, that he is made for Society, and not to go out of the World; 'tis the order Providence hath placed us under, and the Law which by our birth is imposed upon us. But as general Society hinders us not from peculiar ties which we have to certain persons that we love more tenderly, and frequent

H most;



( 104 )  
most ; I wish pious persons to be careful in making a good choice of their most valued friends, and familiars , because that will certainly contribute very much to the preservation, and to the increase of their Piety and Vertue.

One may here ask what Judgement and Use may be made of the directors of Consciences. To which I answer, that they may be profitably provided, that they be used with these Precautions ; First , That the use of them be left to the liberty of every Man , for the Scripture not appointing it, it were to impose a Yoke to constrain any person thereto. 2. That they be not used but upon Important Accounts , and Occasions to

require consultation ; else it would occasion sloth , and one should be by that means accustomed not to Consult our own selves, and Breasts in what we ought to , but remit it wholly to the Advice of a Director, which were ill, since none ought to be more concerned for our Salvation than our selves, nor can better be acquainted with our Consciences. 3. That we esteem not our selves servilely tyed to all that a Director pleases to counsel or prescribe , but to reserve a choyce of your own, and a distinction , which may preserve the right which every one hath of judging themselves , from the Dictates of a Director. Otherwise you would make your Conscience the slave

of other men , and attribute an Authority unto them, which belongs only to God , and his Son Jesus Christ. 4. To make a good choyce when you will have recourse to a Director, that you might not fall into ill hands, for there is but few persons endued with a quality fit for that employment, and very few that abuse not such Offices to the gaining a kind of Dominion over Souls ; and power in Families. In a word , this practice is subject to inconveniencies ; Therefore must be used with great wisdom and discretion. Nevertheless I confess that there are some occasions wherein one may draw much aid, light, and consolation from the direction of a Holy Man, who is wise, and enlighten



ned, when one has recourse to such a one.

In fine, one of the best precepts one can give upon this Subject, is to pray unto God, ardently begging from him the Conduct and Assistance of the Holy Spirit : For without his Grace and Benediction, all Exterior means signifie nothing, since it is he that produces in us, both to will, and to do, according to his good pleasure. But when I speak of Prayer, I mean not only that which is usual in Publick Assemblies and Families, where I suppose that every one does their duty ; but I mean they should attend their private and particular Prayers ; in their Closets, in their Chambers and in their Beds, where eve-

ry one is more Recollected : I mean those frequent Elevations of our hearts unto God , which may be done in our very business and Employments, and although they be short and momentary , yet need not be less Ardent, or less Efficacious. But in extraordinary Occasions, as Afflictions , or Days of Preparation for the Holy Supper, you may add , if you can, privat Fasting unto your Prayer, to be the better disposed in your Devotion. **G O D** grant that this small Treatise which I have Consecrated to the use of his Church , may also serve to the good and Edification of all Faithful Souls, that they might gather that fruit from it, which I have proposed

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sed to my self, to the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.  
*Amen.*

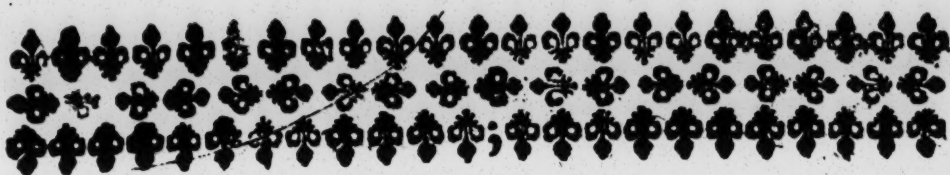
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H 4

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A

# Prayer

Of Breparation for the  
Communion.



MY GOD, my Sa-  
viour, and my  
Father, I pro-  
strate my self at  
the Foot of thy  
Throne, to adore  
thy Majesty, and to acknow-  
ledge thy Righteousness, I  
H5

am in thy presence but Dust and Ashes , a Worm of the Earth , and most unworthy of thy turning of thy Eyes towards me , or imploying the cares of thy Providence towards my good. For what is mortal Man that thou shouldst regard him, or the Son of Man that thou shouldst visit him ? But moreover I am Criminal Dust and Ashes , a sinful Creature which deserves thy severest Judgements ; And the more I consider my self , the more I find my self guilty of violating all thy Commandments , ungrateful for the many Favours which I have received from thy goodness , and unfaithful to all the Engagements of my Vocation. Alas ! Lord , If thou shouldst take



take notice of my Iniquities, how could I subsist in thy sight? I have stop't my Ears a thousand times against the Exhortations of thy Word, and have been deaf to thy Threatnings, and scarce sensible of thy Corrections: busied with the vain and perishing things of this World, I have suffered myself often to be surprized in their snares, neglecting the things of my Salvation, and thy Kingdom. How often have I preferred my Passions, and Interests against the Rules of my Duty, and thy Righteousness? How many times have I wandered from thy Wayes, and thrown my self into the Wayes of the World, where I should have been lost, if

thou hadst not stretch't forth  
 thy Hand to have Rescued me?  
 Every moment of my life might  
 reproach me for my weaknes-  
 ses, and my imperfections, my  
 Conscience accuses me, and my  
 sins are on every side, cloath-  
 ing me with Confusion, for thy  
 Eyes are too pure to suffer sin,  
 or to take delight in unright-  
 eousness. I condemn my self  
 therefore in thy presence, and  
 confess, that if thou wouldst  
 deal with me in thy rigour,  
 thou wouldst find in me too  
 much reason to deliver me up  
 to thy just Vengeance, and  
 cause enough to withdraw from  
 me, all the precious signs of  
 the Covenant, and of Ado-  
 ption which thou hast given me,  
 and so absolutely reject me from  
 thy

thy Communion. But thou art a gracious and compassionate God , and moved with the Bowels of a Father towards his Children. Those that thou dost once love , thou lovest to the end ; thy Gifts , and Vocation are without Repentance , and thou hast promised , that though our sins be red as Blood , thou wouldest make them as white as Snow. Have mercy on me then , for I fly to thy great mercies ; my God , pardon me my faults , and according to the greatness of thy Compassions , blot out all my Transgressions. I know thou requirest the Conversion of sinners that they might live , but I know also , that though my Repentance be not such as it ought



to be , yet thou dost not  
 quench the smoaking Flax., nor  
 break a bruised Reed. Thy  
 dear Son dyed for me , and  
 rose again for my Justification,  
 and is ascended into Heaven,  
 and there makes Intercession for  
 me ; Listen to the voice of his  
 Blood , pleading for me , and  
 in respect of his Sufferings and  
 merits, Restore me thy joy and  
 Salvation ; I acknowledge no  
 other Saviour nor Mediator but  
 him , nor place any confidence  
 but in his Sacrifice , for he is  
 the Way , and the Truth , and  
 the Life , and none can come  
 unto Thee , but by Him. Im-  
 pute his dying Obedience unto  
 me , and Cloath me with his  
 perfect Righteousness , that I  
 may appear unreproueable in  
 th

thy sight. And since thou now callest me to thy Divine Table; grant me Grace, O Lord, to receive worthily these Sacred Testimonies of my Salvation. Loosen my Thoughts from Earthly things, and raise me to the Meditation of the great and Celestial Objects, which are represented to me in thy Sacrament. Increase in me the Faith of these Mysteries, that with a Heart truly purified, I may receive the Body and Blood of thy Son, as the Victim which was once offered unto thee upon the Cross; and now Represented unto me in this Heavenly Action. Let me receive them with a lively Faith, and with a sincere Acceptation, as thou art pleased to give them  
in

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in sincere Love. Let me accompany this Faith with a profound humility , and holy gratitude , that without any merits of our own ; Nay when we were plunged into Sin , and Condemnation, thou didst draw out of thy Treasury this **Eternal Manna** , this **Bread of Life** : To Communicate thereby unto us , a hope of a most happy and heavenly Immortality , which thou hast prepared for us above in thy Celestial Mansions. These things , my God , I beg of Thee , in the Name of thy Son to whom, with Thee , and the Holy Spirit , One God blessed for ever , be given all Honour and Power, and Glory, from Age to Age, *Amen.*





A

# PRAYER

After the

## Communion.



Y GOD, my Sa-  
viour, and my Fa-  
ther, I yield Thee  
the profoundest  
Thanks of my  
Heart, that thou  
hast without all

Considerations of the many  
faults which I have committed  
against

against thee , which made me  
 unworthy of thy Bounties , re-  
 stored me to thy Favour, in gi-  
 ving me the assurances of thy  
 Love , in the Communion of  
 thy Son Jesus Christ. What  
 shall I render unto thee , for  
 all thy benefits towards me ?  
 Suffer me not , O God, to fall  
 into Ingratitude, after so many  
 Testimonies of thy favour and  
 good will , which I have recei-  
 ved from Thee. Bless the Lord  
 O my Soul, and let all which  
 is within me bless his Hol-  
 Name. Bless the Lord , O  
 Soul , and forget not all  
 Benefits ; Who pardons  
 thy Iniquities , and heals  
 Infirmities. But what Gra-  
 titude can I make Thee ,  
 God ; but to Consecrate

self intirely to thy Service and  
 Glory ? Let all the Actions  
 of my Life be as a loud Voice,  
 Crying , I am Crucified with  
 Jesus Christ , and the Life  
 which I live now , is not mine,  
 but Jesus **C**hrist Liveth in me ;  
 and I live in the Faith of the  
 Son of God , who loveth me,  
 and hath given himself for me.  
 This is my Desire , and this  
 is my Intention , but I can  
 promise my self nothing of this ;  
 But do Thou make an end,  
 Lord , of that which Thou hast  
 begun by Thy Grace ; And  
 suffer not Thy own Work to  
 be imperfect. Let me end  
 my dayes in Thy Fear ; Let  
 neither Death , nor Life, An-  
 gel , Principality nor **P**ower,  
 things present, nor things to  
 come,



come, nor height, nor depth,  
ever be able to separate me from  
thy Love.

Make me bear with Confidence, and with Courage all Afflictions, which accompany the Profession of thy Truth; and let me never fall under any Temptation. Let not the World seduce my heart at any time, either by its Promises, or its Threatnings; or Illusions of what kind soever; but with steadiness. Let me ever walk in thy Wayes, going on towards the mark, which thou hast proposed unto me, and is the purpose of my Calling. And the Gift of Peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blessing

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of the Everlasting Covenant,  
make me perfect in every good  
Work , to do his Will , work-  
ing in me that which is well  
pleasing in his sight, through Je-  
sus Christ, *Amen.*

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**F I N I S.**

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